The African Communist

NUMBER 38 THIRD QUARTER 1969

REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH

a report on the conference of the frican National Congress of S.Africa Morogoro Tanzania April-May 1969

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party

No. 38 Third Quarter 1969

Contents

5 EDITORIAL NOTES

The World Communist Conference
People's Power in the Sudan
Socialist Germany
Zambia in the Front Lines
Let Our People Go!

12 MOBILISING FOR REVOLUTION

A report on the critical Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, South Africa, Conference held at Morogoro, Tanzania from April 25 to May 1. This article describes the background spirit and political line adopted; outlines the main decisions, and the gist of the stirring call to unity delivered by Acting President-General, O. R. Tambo.

27 STUDENTS IN REVOLT: II

ALEXANDER SIBEKO

South Africa's Students are alive and well, and not uninfluenced by world events, declares the author. Following his previous study of the student movement in many parts of the world, he presents the exciting development of the student movement in the South African police state, and links it with the revolutionary process under way in the country.

42 CHE IN BOLIVIA

JOE SLOVO

Widespread interest was aroused by Joe Slovo's article in a recent issue of this journal on 'The Theories of Regis Debray'. Reissued by us in pamphlet form, it was translated and reproduced in many parts of the world.
It was for this reason that our Editorial Board approached him to contribute his reflections on the 'Bolivian Diaries'

of Ernesto Che Guevara. In a spirit of deep respect for the great revolutionary martyr, the writer nevertheless submits his ideas to comradely but searching re-examination.

57 THE I.C.U.

TERESA ZANIA

The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union was the first mass organisation of South Africa's black proletariat. It flourished during the twenties and became a powerful force. In this fascinating glimpse of South Africa's history, the first in a series which will appear from time to time approaching the fiftieth anniversary of the South African Communist Party, the writer describes the rise and fall of the 'I.C.U.' She also adds some useful lessons for today.

75 BOOK REVIEWS

81 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editorial Notes:

The World Communist Conference

The international conference of Communist and Workers Parties held in Moscow in June was a great, historic landmark in the centuries-old struggle for the liberation of mankind. The conference brought together revolutionaries from 75 countries of Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and the Caribbean, from every corner of the world. Leaders of the governments of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, well-known public figures of mass workers' parties who play an important role in the public life of countries where the people have won democratic rights, representatives of illegal parties conducting a fierce and bloody fight against fascist and colonialist terror... all met together as comrades and equals to hammer out a common approach and plan of action in the world-wide struggle against imperialism, and for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism.

The main item before the meeting was the strenghtening of the unity of the Communist movement, and of all anti-imperialist forces, in action against imperialist aggression and domination. The document adopted on this question, which was worked out collectively over more than a year of preparatory work with the democratic participation of all the Parties that wished to do so, is a remarkable Marxist-Leninist thesis which demands careful study and implementation by all Communist and other revolutionaries. Together with other documents and materials of the Conference it appears as a supplement to this issue of *The African Communist.*

The international conference took place on the eve of the

world-wide celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the birth of that towering genius of the Communist movement, Vladimir Ilitch Lenin. The stirring 'address' adopted on this memorable centenary rightly calls not only for the popularisation of the facts of Lenin's great contributions to human liberation, but also for the distribution and study of his immortal writings on a mass scale.

Likewise the documents on Vietnam, the Peace appeal and other written records of this Conference constitute a guide to action to anti-imperialists of all countries. Apart from its records the fact of its having taken place successfully, overcoming so many difficulties along the way, and uniting closer than ever so many millions of Communists, the vanguard of the world's working people, was in itself a triumph; a shattering blow to imperialism; an earnest that this greatest of all revolutionary movements of human history is consolidating its ranks, preparing for fresh big advances, eliminating all varieties of opportunism.

We are proud that our own South African Communist Party, as well as other Marxist-Leninist Parties of the African continent played an active and positive part in convening this conference, preparing its documents and participating in its deliberations. We declare that we shall undeviatingly strive for the translation of its decisions into reality

People's Power in Sudan

Imperialism and local reaction suffered a sharp setback in the Sudan on 25th May when, backed by powerful forces among the population and in the army a new anti-imperialist government took power, headed by Babikar Awadalla, former Chief Justice, who resigned his post in protest against the unconstitutional banning of the Communist Party. He had previously played a leading part in the overthrow of the Aboud dictatorship.

The new government corresponds to the aspirations of the Sudanese people for radical change and non-capitalist development towards socialism. In one of its first statements, the revolutionary government announced its immediate tasks as including:

to put an end to unemployment;
fight inflation;
ensure compulsory elementary education;
adopt a new democratic constitution;
achieve a peaceful normalisation of the situation in the South.

The Democratic Republic of the Sudan will consolidate relations with all states fighting against imperialism and strengthen its ties with the United Arab Republic.

The new Cabinet reflects the broad basis of the revolutionary movement. It covers a wide spectrum of democrats, socialists, and communists. Among the new Cabinet Ministers is Comrade Joseph Garang, whose article on the Southern Sudan appeared in the last issue of *The African Communist.*

A similar preponderance of revolutionary democrats prevails in the 10-man Council of the Revolution, headed by the new Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Gaafar Nimiere, the Minister of Defense.

In a radio speech, Premier Awadalla called for national unity behind the new government and made a passionate indictment against the 'five lean years' of rule by reactionary party politicians who had exploited the people's revolution for personal ends.

One of the first acts of the revolutionary government was to disperse the undemocratically elected 'Constituent Assembly' which was plotting to saddle the country with a reactionary so-called 'Islamic Constitution'

All reactionary, bourgeois and feudalist parties have been banned, including the former government party, the self-styled United Democratic Party, the UMMA Party, the Moslem Brotherhood and the secessionist Southern Parties, 'SANU' and the 'Southern Front', whose links with imperialism were exposed in our last issue.

Massive support for the revolutionary government has been expressed by Sudanese trade unions, the Communist Party, and other democratic organisations. A broadcast on Sudan Radio announced that all local armed forces had expressed their fullest support.

Swift measures were taken to replace suspected officers at all levels of the army with those loyal to the revolution.

It would be hard to overestimate the significance for the African revolution of these radical developments in this huge area of Africa, populated by 14 million souls, and bordering on Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo-Kinshasa, Uganda and Kenya.

No doubt the imperialists, in collusion with local reaction, will do everything in their power to subvert People's Sudan from within and without. We look to the leaders and the masses for the utmost vigilance and energy to consolidate the gains of 25th May; and to all revolutionary and patriotic forces in Africa to render our Sudanese brothers the utmost support.

Socialist Germany

Within a few days of its establishment, the revolutionary government of the Sudan established diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic, joining Cambodia and Iraq in what is bound to become an irresistable trend among other Afro-Asian states as well. This was a crushing blow for the bullying tactics of imperialist West Germany, which sought through its 'Hallstein Doctrine' to prevent any recognition by other countries of the other, socialist German state.

On 7th October the German Democratic Republic celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its foundation. This was an event of deep significance for Africans and other freedom-loving peoples.

Our people are well acquainted with German imperialism. We remember the atrocities committed in Namibia (South-West Africa) and Tanganyika under German rule. We remember the vicious anti-African racist ideas of fascist Germany under Hitler, carried forward today by Hitler's former disciples, the Nazi Vorster clique in the Republic of South Africa. We are aware that Vorster's ally, the Federal German Republic, is carrying forward those evil traditions of German imperialism in the changed conditions of present-day neo-colonialism.

But there was always another Germany: working class Germany, the mortal enemy of German imperialism and staunch friends of Africans and all oppressed peoples, the Germany of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Ernst Thälmann, Wilhelm Pieck, Otto Grotewohl and Walter Ulbricht.

It is this other Germany that finds its expression in the present-day German Democratic Republic, the first socialist state of the German nation. During the past twenty years, this state has made giant's strides, transforming the lives of the working people, and standing firmly on the side of peace and relentless struggle, together with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community, against imperialism and its war provocations.

It is this Germany which has given and is giving evidence of its concrete support and assistance for African and other newly-independent states, and for the fighting liberation movements of our people.

From Africa, therefore, we send warmest greetings to the German Democratic Republic. Long live Socialist Germany!

Zambia in the Front Lines

IN ZAMBIA'S recent general election — the first since independence in 1964 — the governing United National Independence Party (UNIP) won 81 out of the 105 elective seats. The so-called African National Congress of Zambia headed by Nkumbula won 23 of the remaining seats, and one went to an independent candidate. Three Cabinet Ministers lost their seats. Mundia, a restricted leader of the banned United Party, won his seat despite the fact that he campaigned from the restriction camp.

Local reaction is working hard to weaken the leadership of UNIP and thus play into the hands of imperialism and its agents and allies, the white minority regimes of Southern Africa. It is significant that all three Ministers who were defeated were standing in constituencies in Barotseland —

which borders on Angola and Namibia (South West Africa). In this province Nkumbula's opposition party won 8 of the ten seats. Barotseland was long an undeveloped labour reservoir for South African mines and agriculture.

Soon after independence, in accordance with OAU decisions to isolate South Africa, Zambia banned all recruitment of labour for mines and farms in that country — it was this decision which no doubt caused some temporary hardship, together with the fanning of tribal and local differences, which enabled the opposition to make some headway in Barotseland. But more sinister forces are at work.

Portuguese violations against Zambia are becoming daily occurrences. Threats against Zambian independence are rumbling from Pretoria, on the grounds that Zambia is allegedly encouraging African freedom fighters in Zimbabwe — it would indeed be strange if any independent African state should fail in its duty to assist liberation movements in the South. Pretoria's stooge, Banda of Malawi is making absurd claims to Zambian territory.

The lesson and the warning are clear.

Zambia must be considered as falling within the war zone in Southern Africa. The government shows signs of recognising this objective reality; it is struggling against local reaction and showing increased vigilance against provocations from the Portuguese and white minority regimes. But much remains to be done.

Historically Zambia's fate is inseparable from that of the oppressed struggling peoples of Southern Africa whose fight is fundamentally directed against imperialism as a whole, the mainstay of the oppressive fascist regimes. Zambia, pioneer of independence and freedom in the area, is a source of enormous strength and significance to our people; but her contribution must remain limited while she herself remains within the orbit of imperialism.

A welcome step forward has been the termination of the military agreement under which more than 110 British air and army officers had been seconded to train Zambian army personnel. It is to be hoped that this move will extend to the withdrawal of Zambian army cadres from British

military academies where even President Kaunda's son is currently undergoing military training.

Unfortunately this progressive step forward must be balanced against a recent agreement reported to replace the departing British officers with Italian ones. Zambia is already to buy military helicopters from Italy worth nearly £1 million sterling. In mid-January President Kaunda stated in London his intention to recruit British men to fight in Zambia.

By increasing her ties with NATO powers, Zambia is limiting her potential to advance to complete and genuine national independence and to throw her full weight behind the fight for Southern African liberation, key to Africa's advance as a whole.

Let our People go!

Thousands of South African political prisoners are still rotting in jails, under abominable conditions, on Robben Island and other prisons throughout the country. Recently a letter smuggled from this hell-island exposed some of the frightful conditions prevailing there. Since last year 'four of our men died, mainly through negligence', the letter states, drawing attention to the extremely inadequate medical services. 'The food quality is extremely poor.'

The recent release of Mr. R. Sobukwe, six years after his term of three years imprisonment had expired, was long overdue and is warmly to be welcomed, although he will remain under 12-hours-a-day house arrest and is restricted to Kimberley.

Perhaps the fascist government was hoping that by this release of a minor political prisoner, head of a breakaway organisation which has long been discredited and has disintegrated, it would blind the world to the terrible plight of those thousands who still remain in its jails, under house arrest and other forms of lawless restriction. It hopes to present a totally false image of a more 'enlightened' and 'liberal' turn in its policy.

The real picture is shown by the brutal suppression of the

strike, in March, of 3,000 Durban African dockworkers who demanded better pay and conditions, of the student demonstrations. The real picture was revealed by Police Minister, S. Muller, when he revealed in Parliament that over a thousand specially trained police from the Republic were concentrated in Rhodesia on the borders of Zambia.

South Africans and their friends abroad will continue to press forward with all their might the demand for the unconditional release of all political prisoners. In the words of the resolution of the recent Morogoro Consultative Conference of the African National Congress:

> Conference vehemently condemns the continued imprisonment, detention and persecution of thousands of our gallant Freedom Fighters by the Vorster fascist regime. Conference salutes our gallant leaders languishing in Robben Island and other prisons, such as Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Elias Motsoaledi, Dennis Goldberg, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, Wilton Mkwayi, Abram Fischer as well as numerous ANC and Umkhonto we Size men and women.
>
> Conference pledges never to rest until these comrades are released.

Resolutions of the African National Congress

(Adopted at Morogoro, 1st May, 1969.)

The Consultative Conference of the African National Congress approves the new administrative structure of the organisation.

It affirms the necessity to integrate all oppressed national groups and revolutionary forces and individuals under the banner of the A.N.C.

It instructs the National Executive Committee to work out the means by which this can be done so as to mobilise all revolutionaries in functioning units of the African National Congress.

Conference expresses its unanimous approval of the Political Report of the N.E.C., the Strategy and Tactics of the Revolution, and the Programme of the Revolution: the Freedom Charter.

Conference extends revolutionary greetings to brother Fighters for Freedom in Africa, Vietnam, the Middle East and elsewhere who, arms in hand, are fighting our common enemy; imperialism in all its forms.

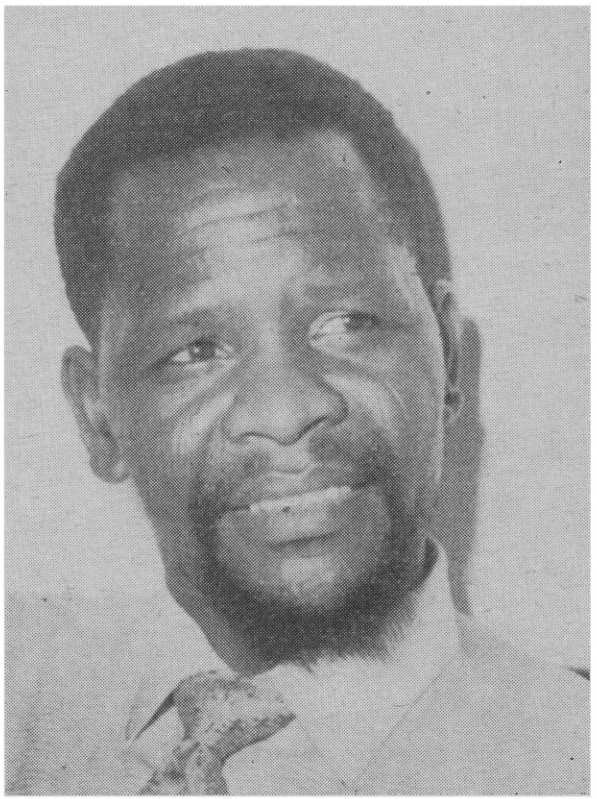
We greet our brothers of Southern Africa and the Portuguese colonies who have scored and are scoring brilliant victories over the enemy. We shall win!

We South African revolutionaries pay unsitnted tribute to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam who have added glorious pages to the history of liberation. We fully support their just demands for the unconditional withdrawal of the U.S. and mercenary troops from Vietnam and the reunification of their motherland.

We greet the peoples of the Arab countries resisting imperialist-backed Zionist aggression, and support the right of the dispossessed Arabs of Palestine to fight for their return to their homeland.

The order of the day is:

CLOSE RANKS!



O. R. TAMBO

Acting President - General
African National Congress
South Africa

Moulding the Revolution

THE MOROGORO CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

April 25– May 1, 1969

The Consultative Conference of the African National Congress held at Morogoro in Tanzania was perhaps the most remarkable, critical and decisive in the long history of the A. N. C. which began in 1912. The Conference has been well described as one of Total Mobilisation for the National Democratic Revolution in South Africa. Taking place at a time of crucial moment for the development of the armed struggle and in the internal life of the liberation movement, it emerged with a clear-cut political direction and a series of practical decisions whose energetic and single-minded implementation will undoubtedly advance the oppressed masses of our country far along the road to victory and the conquest of people's power.

Conference made important changes in the structure and administration of the ANC. A new and smaller National Executive Committee was elected; a Revolutionary Council was created representative of all national groups and revolutionary forces in our country. The Revolutionary Council was charged with the task of intensifying the armed struggle and the full mobilisation of the masses in support of the revolution. Changes were made in the organisation of external solidarity work. The alliance with ZAPU to which much tribute was paid was to be further strengthened and developed. It was also decided to take steps to increase co-operation and co-ordination with Frelimo, MPLA, PAIGC and SWAPO.

Certainly, the serious problems confronting the movement had led to a ferment of ideas, of demands for change, at all levels of the liberation movement. But those who had perhaps speculated on divisions or confusion arising and spreading were bitterly disappointed. The overwhelming and

unanimous will of the conference at Morogoro was for Unity within the Ranks; for rededication to Congress and its capable leader, Acting President-General O. R. Tambo; for determined concentration on the central task — development of the armed struggle, the organisation of the revolution to free our country.

More than seventy delegates came to Morogoro. Present among them were veterans of the struggle, personified by the towering presence of 'Uncle' J. B.' Marks. There were the emissaries who had carried the message of the A.N.C. to every corner of the five continents, who had exposed apartheid mercilessly at the United Nations and won solidarity for our people at innumerable meetings in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America. Present too — for the first time as fully participating delegates and not only as bearers of fraternal messages — were outstanding leaders of the partners of the Congress Alliance; the Indian and Coloured People's Congresses and the revolutionary working class movement; tried revolutionaries of the calibre of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, Reg. September and Joe Slovo.

But above all, Morogoro was a Conference of the fighting youth of South Africa: delegations from the various encampments of the liberation army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and among them men who had seen action at Wankie and other engagements of the ZAPU-ANC military alliance against the joint forces of the Smith and Vorster regimes, who had seen the self-styled white 'supermen' turn tail and run, and who knew that victory can and shall be won. It was their presence, their mood of revolutionary urgency, their voice and their demands which prevailed at Morogoro; their insistence on priority for the armed struggle and the mobilisation of all revolutionaries at home and abroad, their demand for changed structures to meet the needs of the new phase of the revolution, for new and higher standards of political and personal conduct of all in the movement.

The conference was opened formally on April 25th in the presence of distinguished visitors. Mr. G. Magombe, Executive Secretary of the OAU Liberation Committee brought greetings, as did Mr. A. Swai, TANU's secretary of External

Affairs, Mr. J. J. Nambuta, of the National Union of Tanganyika Workers, Mr. Amadou N'Diaye of the All-African Trade Union Federation, spokesmen of ZAPU, MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO, local leaders and others. The Morogoro Training College students provided a guard of honour for delegates entering the hall, and dressed in their green and black uniforms, greeted the delegates with national and revolutionary songs — to which the ANC delegates responded suitably in kind.

OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION

Then followed the days of open, frank and democratic discussion in which every aspect of the policy, tactics and work of the liberation movement were subjected to searching review. The atmosphere was one of warmth and comradship, against a background of high enthusiasm at the stirring deeds of the ANC-ZAPU guerillas against the enemy forces. But it was also one of unrestricted criticism in which all the main aspects of the movement's programme and strategy, its leadership structure and style of work, were examined and tested in the light of the overriding demands of the present phase of armed struggle and the national democratic revolution.

It is important to remember the background to the debates. Since the banning of the ANC in 1960, far-reaching changes have occurred. Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed section of the liberation movement, was founded, the sabotage campaign launched inside the country, and large numbers of volunteers were enrolled for military training and formation outside the country in preparation for their return. The External Mission of the ANC was sent out of the country, with the backing of the other partners of the Congress Alliance, to put the case against apartheid before the court of world opinion, and to mobilise support and solidarity for our people's fight.

There can be no doubt that these years have seen striking achievements. For the first time in its history our South African liberation movement has created an armed force

capable of engaging the enemy and inspiring a nation-wide mass insurrection against white domination which must end in victory. Moreover, due to the correct policy of the ZAPU-ANC military alliance, units of this army have already entered into action and demonstrated their capacity to survive and to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy.

These accomplishments are the more striking in that they took place against a background of mounting terror and repression at home; the enactment of the 'Sabotage' and 'Terrorism' Laws. The introduction of imprisonment without trial during which Congressites were interrogated under gruesome tortures made public political activity of the traditional type virtually impossible. Heavy blows were inflicted on the leadership in the 'Rivonia', 'Fischer', 'Mkwayi' and other trials. Repeated bannings of their leading personnel brought the public functioning of the Indian and Coloured Congresses and the Congress of Trade Unions to a temporary halt. These reverses imposed a heavy burden on the External Mission, which was compelled to undertake many functions of leadership and organisation which had previously been borne by the underground leadership within the country.

Whatever the achievements, however, the mounting tempo and stress of the struggle had pitilessly revealed weaknesses in the structures, emphases and style of work of the movement which urgently called for correction. Political activity and information was lacking, especially at grass-roots level; the virtual collapse of the old Alliance machinery had left a gap which resulted in a failure to integrate all revolutionaries in the work of the movement; a dangerous chasm was opening up between the leadership and the rank-and-file which provided soil for various divisive tendencies foreign to the spirit of the ANC and its traditional allies. These objective facts rendered the Morogoro Conference urgently timely and necessary; it was the greatest achievement of that Conference that it provided a basis for the consolidation of the African National Congress at a higher level than ever by inaugurating those far-reaching changes called for by the present phase of the South African Revolution.

The Conference unanimously approved the main policy documents before it; the political report of the National Executive, a reassessment and reaffirmation of the Freedom Charter, the revolutionary programme of the ANC, and an analysis of the Strategy and Tactics of the movement at this stage.

The political report opens by examining various changes which have taken place in South Africa over the past five years. Economically this is the most advanced country on the continent. 'But its wealth has been and is produced by the most ruthless exploitation of African labour. Cheap labour and vast natural resources are the basis for what is now an imperialist, racist and fascist South Africa.'

'The country has made spectacular advances in the industrial field... The National Income was estimated at about £ 2,356 million in 1961. Today the figure is nearer £ 4,000 million. Although the mining industry continues to be the main prop of economic expansion by reason of its supreme role as foreign exchange earner, manufacturing industry is contributing a bigger and bigger share of the national income.'

'The growth of industry has been accompanied by a swift increase in the numbers of the industrial proletariat and the wage-earners generally. Of great significance is the fact that the proportion of Africans engaged in the manufacturing industries is growing rapidly; non-whites constitute almost 80 per cent of the workers... The numbers of wage-earners in our country, including mining, manufacturing and agricultural workers amount to over 6 million... people now dependent for their livelihood on the selling of their labour power constitute the majority of the South African adult population.'

The Report points out that, although the labour of the non-white people has been a major factor in the economic progress of the country, they have not benefitted accordingly.

In real terms the share of the National Income estimated for Africans has fallen from approximately 21 per cent just after

the second world war to 19 per cent today. The economic development is not based on an increase in African consumption and more liberal labour or wage policies ... The so-called prosperity exists only for the privileged and is based on exploitation of cheap labour and the inflation of already greatly inflated profits resulting therefrom. There is absolutely no justification for the reformist thesis that economic development in our country will enter an 'era of high mass consumption and the granting of political reforms by the white minority.'

Africans and other non-whites, taken in the mass, are getting an even smaller share of the national cake than they did twenty years ago. The present high economic activity is based precisely on the oppression and the exploitation of the non-whites and those who benefit thereby can hardly be expected to initiate changes. Only a revolutionary struggle waged by the masses of the people can bring about meaningful changes.

The report briefly discusses developments among the white political parties. Under Vorster, the Nationalist Party continues to intensify the repressive measures of the Verwoerd regime. 'The highly-publicised divisions in this party represented by the Verligte (enlightened) and Verkrampte (diehard) factions are not based on principles. The dispute is over how white supremacy can be most effectively maintained.' The official opposition party — the United Party — has surrendered on all important issues and can never be of any significance concerning fundamental changes. The Progressive Party, seeking a relaxation of apartheid and the constitutional attainment of a qualified franchise for the oppressed, has been unable to make any headway among the white electorate, with only one representative in Parliament. The Liberal Party has disappeared. Thus 'middle groups' are disappearing in South Africa.

The process of polarisation remains the trend, with reactionary elements gravitating towards the fascist Nationalist Party and all revolutionary forces moving towards the African National Congress and its allies.

BANTUSTAN FRAUD

The economic changes and growth experienced in the rest of the country, the Report points out, have not been reflected in the 'Reserves' (otherwise known as 'Bantu homelands' — officially, and popularly as 'Bantustans'). 'These areas of

subsistence farming remain reservoirs of labour for the rest of the economy. In the last five years, the Reserves, with a population of over 4 million have had just under 2,000 new jobs created in them. This ludicrous situation illustrates the bankruptcy of the policy of 'Separate Development.'

Analysing the recent Transkei election — in which the dominant Transkei National Independence Party headed by Kaiser Matanzima received 200,000 votes as against 400,000 votes for its opponents, but got 28 out of the 45 elective seats, — the report comments:

> In spite of the notorious Proclamation 400 which maintains the state of emergency in the Transkei; the restriction of political meetings; and the weakness of the opposition to Matanzima which is opportunistic and does not constitute any real alternative — over two-thirds of those who participated voted against Matanzima and his group. The fact that 400,000 did not even bother to participate says a great deal.

The government still claims to be pursuing the Bantustan policy in other parts of the country. The Ciskei Territorial Authority now has a so-called legislative council headed by Chief Justice Mabandla, and a new council has been announced in 'Tswanaland'. But there is still utter silence about Sekhukhuniland and Natal, and it is now clear to any serious analyst that the Bantustan policy as a solution to the country's problems is a hopeless failure. 'It only serves as a means of deception and propaganda.' In this respect, however, its effects should not be underestimated. 'The high-sounding titles, salaries, ministerial houses, trading and business opportunities were bound to attract some groups in the country. The effects of Bantu Education and the intensive racialistic, ethnic and reactionary propaganda spewed forth by the local Msakazo, Radio Bantu and numerous fancy journals, and producing a narrow social grouping that could be the basis of a compradore, collaborator class.

'Yet, over and over again, the Government is forced by the logic of its anti-African policy of oppression to act even against the potential collaborator.' It promised that only Africans would be allowed to trade in segregated townships. 'The next thing was the edict that all African traders must leave the urban areas and proceed to the homelands in the

Reserves. This means ruin to the very traders who had been so anxious to sing hallelujahs and hurrahs to the government.'

As with the Africans, so with the Indian and Coloured communities. 'As the network of the Indian and Coloured Affairs Departments spreads, the real rights and opportunities become narrower. Oppression, restrictions, fear have been intensified.'

MILITARISATION

The real intentions of the fascist government are to be seen in the spectacular increase in military and security budgets. Defence estimates have jumped from 44 million rand in 1960/61 to 255 million rand in 1966/67. In the same period police expenditure has risen from R 36 million to R 86 million.

The Security Council embargo on the sale of arms to South Africa has not been effective. Some countries, like France, have ignored it. Others have co-operated in the building of arms factories in South Africa with foreign capital and techniques, under licence from such firms as Britain's I.C.I., FN of Belgium and Panhard of France.

South Africa's white minority is behaving as if she is involved in preparations for a large-scale war. For the first time universal conscription has been introduced for whites. From the age of 17 all white males have to undergo nine periods of military training, the first period being twelve months. 'This is the burden South Africa has imposed upon itself as the gendarme of imperialism in Africa.'

However, South Africa is not the unassailable fortress of white domination painted by government propaganda, wherein 'peace and quiet prevail'. The revolutionary organisations are overcoming the problems of working unter fascist conditions. Thousands of leaflets have been distributed in the country calling on the people to organise and resist. On Freedom Day (June 26) last year, the ANC militants at home showed their daring and courage in magnificent demonstrations. More recently, the Durban dockers, coming out on strike for better wages and conditions, gave a stirr-

ing example of courage and revolutionary spirit; and the non-white doctors electrified the country by their militant protest against unequal pay — they receive about half the salaries paid to white doctors.

'Our people know,' the Report continues, 'that the forces of the ZAPU/ANC alliance are fighting in Zimbabwe.' That is what spells doom for the state of white supremacy and apartheid. In the words of the Acting President-General:

> **South Africa . . . has been drawn fully into armed confrontation with our revolutionary forces. It is clearly only a matter of time before this confrontation spreads itself to the valleys, mountains and bush of South Africa. There is nothing whatever that can halt the spread of the revolution to every part of Southern Africa . . .**

The tasks of the ANC and the movement are to mobilise the entire people inside the country; to intensify the armed struggle, to find the correct strategy and tactics. 'This involves a correct assessment of the strength and weaknesses of the enemy and its imperialist allies; as well as our own strength and weaknesses, our potential and that of the whole anti-imperialist forces.'

THE IMPERIALIST CAMP

Our immediate enemies, the white fascist regime in South Africa, are an important and integral part of the imperialist camp. Internationally the imperialists' main preoccupation today is a desperate attempt to stem the anti-colonialist revolution and to regain their former positions of political economic and military dominance over the peoples of the world. To achieve their objective they have embarked upon a global strategy of reactionary and brutal counter-attack against progressive governments and revolutionary liberation movements.

The Report instances a number of examples of imperialist methods; the fomenting of hotbeds of war and acts of provocation; the use of 'springboards' in all continents, such as Israel in the Middle East; Japan in Asia: 'In Africa, fascist South Africa is the main bulwark and fortress of reaction and imperialism. It is of vital economic and strategic value

in the whole global strategy of imperialism.' The imperialists subvert anti-imperialist governments; hinder the progress of developing countries through neo-colonialist economic levers; support reactionary and puppet regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They seek to assassinate revolutionaries of which the murder of Comrade Eduardo Mondlane of Frelimo is the most recent example. Imperialist agents foment splits and desertions in the ranks of liberation movements and progressive organisations; they slander the liberation movements and create spurious stooge organisations such as the PAC; they bribe spies, informers and traitors to try to wreck liberation movements.

But this 'frantic counter-offensive' can and will be defeated by 'the united force of popular, progressive and revolutionary states and organisations.' Despite their massive military and economic potential, the imperialists are weak politically and incapable of real unity among themselves because of their constant economic rivalry. 'The rise of the anti-imperialist revolution is constantly undermining the false image of their superiority.'

The shattering and humiliating blows inflicted on the US in Vietnam has exposed the basic weakness of the leading and most aggressive imperialist power. Capitalism, 'which to the vast masses of the people spells ignorance, disease and poverty' is discredited throughout the 'third world'; and so is the anti-Communist campaign through which the imperialists try to justify all their crimes. Imperialism is increasingly facing inner crises and divisions.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT

The main reason for the crises of imperialism, declares the report, is the growing might of the anti-imperialist movement: 'the united struggle and efforts of all anti-imperialist states, organisation and individuals throughout the world. It is a broad movement composed of people with different political beliefs, of different races and colours, from different walks of life, but who are united by their hatred of the evils of imperialism and their firm belief in national independence, genuine democracy, race harmony and peace.

The pillars of the anti-imperialist movement are the Soviet Union and other socialist states, in alliance with the progressive states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the revolutionary liberation movements in countries which are still under colonial or white minority rule, and the democratic forces in the imperialist countries themselves.

Unity of all progressive forces against imperialism and the mobilisation of the vast masses of the people into a united anti-imperialist front will constitute a mighty and invincible force for the destruction of imperialism.

Already the liberation movements have won great victories. Within less than ten years the number of independent African states has reached 41; colonialism has been outlawed as an ideology. These victories grew out of the growing strength and unity of the socialist countries; the growth of militant and determined liberation movements in the colonial countries; the growing unity of all anti-imperialist forces; the conflicts and rivalries between different imperialist states; and the inner crisis within each imperialist country and the fight of working class and other democratic forces within them.

Nevertheless the counter-offensive of the imperialists has done serious damage; it has been helped by discord and disunity within the ranks of the anti-imperialist forces. This has 'spurred the imperialists to strike out right and left in Africa, Asia and Latin America.'

The African National Congress is deeply interested in the unity of the anti-imperialist movement. The success of the struggle in South Africa, its duration and cost in human life, depend to a great extent upon the solidarity, strength and unity of the anti-imperialist forces of the world.

THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

The political report then turns its attention to the African revolution. Pointing out that the African National Congress of South Africa was a pioneer in the fight for all-African emancipation, 'the tutor, guide and inspirer of many a leader and organisation in parts of Africa which have now attained national independence', it comments on the irony of history that (not without reason) while millions of fellow-Africans

are celebrating the dawn of freedom and political independence, their brothers in the South are suffering ever worse repression, oppression and exploitation. Neverthless the Africans of the South are greatly fortified and encouraged by these developments; more determined than ever to defeat the enemy and win power, however high the cost.

The African Revolution has shattered the myth of white superiority; African states have tilted the balance against the imperialists in world forums. The independent states have allocated massive funds for education and health services; proceeding rapidly to Africanise the civil services and lay the foundations of economic development and build up their power in every field.

Yet the African states embark on independence with a terrible legacy of colonial rule; and the imperialists continue to hamper their development. The establishment of the Organisation of African Unity is one of the most hopeful symbols of African aspirations and determination to secure a proper place for our continent in the world. It has, despite certain weaknesses in the OAU and some of its constituent states, greatly supported the liberation movements. Especial tribute is paid by the ANC to the help rendered by Zambia, Tanzania, the United Arab Republic and Algeria 'who have been our mainstay through many a difficulty.'

It is not only solidarity with oppressed Africans which should cause African states to support our struggle; for the situation in Southern Africa is a menace to African security. The extent of military collaboration between the Smith, Caetano and Vorster regimes is not sufficiently appreciated. South African forces, besides their massive presence in Rhodesia, where they outnumber those of the Smith regime, are conducting military actions jointly with the Portuguese against MPLA in Angola. 'For purposes of working out joint strategy, the Portuguese Commander-in-Chief and the South African Commandant-General meet at least once a month.'

Behind this Unholy Alliance is an even more dangerous alliance of the imperialists — the US, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, etc. They have deliberately tried to build Southern Africa and South Africa in particular into a fortress of racialism and colonialism; the last outpost of imperialism in

Africa and a ready springboard to endanger the sovereignty of African states and threaten world peace. South Africa is a treasure house of the imperialists but more than that it is one of their most important strategic military bases and ally in global strategy directed against the forces of national liberation, democracy and peace.

Britain, in particular, is guilty of — behind a smoke-screen of 'condemnation of Rhodesia's rebellion' maintaining Rhodesia as a 'buffer state forming part of a reactionary iron belt barrier' for the Republic of South Africa. 'In pouring their forces into Zimbabwe the Vorster regime was trying to solve one problem but in fact created numerous others.

The bane of South African military strategists is that by undertaking the defence of Southern Africa the fascist regime is giving its military forces an impossible task: creating a long line of defence over a wide area. But to fail to do this will be to allow the liberation forces in the neighbouring countries to achieve victory. ... For us the main strategic question is to see that the guerilla struggle spreads to South Africa itself. When that happens the dispersal of the enemy will, in strategic terms, be complete ... For this we need to launch the struggle at home.

To this end, the ZAPU/ANC alliance must be consolidated and extended to include FRELIMO, MPLA and SWAPO. Such was the principal political burden of the political report. Develop the struggle at home; hasten the return of the trained freedom-fighters; strengthen the ties with our friends abroad.

Special emphasis was laid in the steady support already received from the Liberation Committee of the O. A. U., though this body's unfortunate sponsorship of the PAC has not in any way helped the struggle.

The socialist countries, and the Soviet Union in particular, have been firm and consistent friends and supporters of the liberation struggle in South Africa. The German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Poland are close friends.

There was great anxiety about the developments in Czechoslovakia which has always been a firm friend of the ANC. It is to be hoped that the situation there will soon return to normal.

Special mention was also made of Cuba ('far from our country but always very close to our revolutionary struggle') India ('cemented by Mahatma Gandhi's dirtect association

with our country') and other countries which have rendered exceptional support for South Africa's liberation. 'We have received much support from China in our struggle. Recently, through no fault of the ANC this support has been withheld.' Tribute was also paid to the support rendered to the fight against apartheid from the Scandinavian countries and to the growing number of people in the United States, France, Britain and elsewhere who vigorously oppose the policy maintained by their ruling circles, of aiding and abetting apartheid.

Deserving of particular recognition 'wherever revolutionaries gather' are the achievements of the people of Vietnam. 'This is a people that waged an incredible war of liberation for over twenty years. With unflagging determination and sacrifices, the heroic Vietnamese have written a chapter of history that will never be forgotten.

While concentrating greater resources and attention on the armed struggle and underground work at home, the movement must continue its external solidarity work. 'The South African Revolution is one in which international factors play and will continue to play a very large role,' concluded this section of the Report.

The high political level and dynamic content of the report characterises also the other main documents of the conference. The paper on the Freedom Charter takes a fresh look at this famous document, the common programme of the African National Congress and its allies, including the Communist Party. Do the conditions of armed struggle somehow invalidate some provisions of the Charter?

> Although the Charter was adopted 14 years ago, its words remain as fresh and relevant as ever... The Charter may require elaboration of its revolutionary message. But what is even more meaningful, it requires to be achieved and put into practice. This cannot be done until state power has been seized from the fascist South African government and transferred to the revolutionary forces led by the ANC.

The document on strategy and tactics places the developing armed struggle in South Africa in its overall internat-

ional context 'of transition to the socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions, and the fight for social and econonomic progress by the people of the whole world. It briefly reviews the history of the decision to embark on armed struggle in 1961, and some of the pertinent practical and organisational problems which must be solved.

The Morogoro Conference itself was the culmination of an unprecedently wide and deep discussion held throughout the movement, at every level, among Congress members and supporters. Scores of memoranda, documents and criticisms flowed in to the preparatory committee; all found their reflection on the conference floor itself. There, the fullest democracy prevailed; all spoke freely and without restraint; there were no 'sacred cows' and every activity and policy were retested in a sometimes heated, but always principled and comradely discussion.

Some friends of our revolution may have feared (as our enemies no doubt hoped) that this deep-ranging and searching debate would open up divisions within the movement, or accentuate and harden those already existing. These fears or hopes proved to be completely unfounded. The very frankness and boldness of the discussion was a great healing experience; comrades learnt to know one another; unwarranted suspicions and misunderstandings were cleared up. Morogoro ended on a high note of unity, of consolidation of the movement, of all revolutionaries, on a higher plane than ever before.

The feelings were expressed for all in the inspiring closing address by the Acting President-General.

BEWARE THE WEDGE-DRIVERS

'These are the orders,' said Comrade Tambo, 'to our people; to our youth, our army, to every soldier. These are the orders to our leaders. The order that comes from this Conference is **close ranks.'**

Wage relentless war against disruptors and enemy agents! Defend the revolution against enemy propaganda, whatever form it takes!

Be vigilant, comrades. The enemy is vigilant. Beware the wedge driver! Men who creep from ear to ear, driving wedges among us; who go round creating splits and divisions.
Beware the wedge-driver! Watch his poisonous tongue!

O. R. Tambo expressed complete confidence in the future of the South African revolution. 'We have no right to lose faith in the certainty of victory. We have our heroic fighters and gallant leaders, some of whom have laid down their lives; others among them languishing in many jails throughout the country. They have not shrunk in the face of enemy bullets; nor have they succumbed to the bullying and harrassing tactics of jail warders.

We of South Africa have taken charge of a sector that is vital to the success of the struggle against imperialism. The whole of the revolutionary forces of the world look upon us to play our role in this struggle. Our international duty is clear.
Let us march against the enemy!

The spirit, the resolutions and decisions of the Morogoro Conference of the A.N.C. have laid a firm basis for advances and for victory in the grim and long revolutionary struggle ahead. It will be for the movement as a whole, and each member of every section of it, especially the working class and its Communist Party, to see that that spirit and those resolutions are implemented in all our work, in factory and township, in the camps and on the battlefields.

South African Students are Alive and Well and not Unaffected by World Events

Alexander Sibeko

Apartheid's bully-boy-in-chief, Prime Minister Vorster, likes to refer to South Africa's protesting students as 'little pink liberals' who are 'getting too big for their boots' and are being used by 'communist agitators and foreign elements'. He has threatened 'to send my boys in' to smash campus protests, and has in fact done so several times. He has warned, in that strict disciplinarian manner that has come to nauseate most of South Africa and the world: 'If the students have no selfdiscipline, and if their parents have no discipline, or if the universities are afraid — because of student power — to do their duty, the State not only has the right, but the duty to step in'.

From such remarks it is clear that South African students, more so even than their Western counterparts, are expected to adhere to that schoolroom maxim 'be seen but not heard' — or else! In the rigid and ruthless power structure of apartheid South Africa one might have expected them to remain quiescent; yet the wonder of it all is that the present generation of students — Black and sections of White — are in the process of bravely storming the ramparts of traditional authoritarianism and racist domination.

Students on the March

Student protests are not new to South Africa. A section of White students, moderate and Western orientated, have over the years opposed apartheid legislation in the universities and the consequent loss of academic freedom. Black students, condemned to an inferior system of education, and an inferior existence, have been far more militant in their resistance. However, nothing quite like the events of the past year have been witnessed before. These protests should

not be seen as a mere continuation of those that have taken place in previous years, for there are signs of a radicalisation amongst White students which has not existed before and needs to be explained. The militancy of Black students has been reaffirmed, and although a tiny minority of the student population they are arousing the correct responses from the student movement as a whole.

Despite complex problems, the limitations imposed on White student protests by their class interests, the strict control and regimentation of Black students, the enforced segregation of the groups from one another, and the ever-present likelihood of a vicious crack-down by the State, the demonstrations are developing and growing. The Mafeje controversy, the Fort Hare resistance and expulsions, police swoops on the Witwatersrand campus and elsewhere, have acted as powerful catalysts and rallying points. The protests are breaking-down the Government-imposed isolation of the various campuses, and have often been as sudden and unexpected as the angry May 7 march of Turfloop students on their rector's office.

Behind the demonstrations for university autonomy, and against apartheid, is a growing political awareness on the part of the students involved, and the development of united action linking Black students and anti-apartheid White students. This nationwide protest of the young is moving to a higher and important new stage with mass student demonstrations in support of, and timed to coincide with, the threatened resignation from the hospital service by Black doctors at the end of May, 1969.

The upsurge of student protest is significant and deserves the support of all progressives and revolutionaries. Taking place in a period of unprecedented fascist repression, with the national liberation movement of the African people (the decisive force influencing events in South Africa) driven deep underground, the fact that such demonstrations have taken place at all has come as a surprise to many. Not that the student movement is going to bring about the downfall of apartheid. Not by a long chalk. But current developments in South Africa, such as the Durban dockworkers' strike, the battle of Black doctors for equal pay with Whites, similar

rumblings from African schoolteachers and nurses, and the student discontent, are all indications that political protest is by no means dead and has the appearance of developing new forms. All this at a time when the traditional methods of organising the masses have been savagely curtailed!

Although the South African revolution is on the threshold of armed struggle — the only way of overthrowing apartheid repression and making South Africa free for all who live in it — this certainly does not preclude or make irrelevant other forms of struggle. Rather, the dialectic of a Peoples' War will accelerate the contradictions inherent in apartheid and powerfully stimulate mass struggle and opposition. We must bear this in mind when assessing any protest from whatever quarter in South Africa.

Black Students — White Students — Two South Africas

The composition of South African university students is so varied that they cannot be considered as a single unit or social group. The entire educational system is compulsorily segregated along racial and linguistic lines for all population groups, with further sub-divisions along ethnic and tribal lines for Africans — a set-up as foreign to the idea of a university as can be devised. Of 50,000 university students (enrolment with the University of South Africa, which offers degrees by correspondence, is excluded) a mere 4,000 are Black who attend the five government-controlled tribal colleges for African, Coloured and Indian students. The four English-language universities, where White student protest has been confined, have a student population of 20,000. The Afrikaans language universities — there are now seven — have a combined enrolment of over 25,000.

Each of these groups acts in terms of the position it occupies in the social structure of South African society. The privilege and prosperity of White South Africa is achieved at the expense of the ruthless exploitation and discrimination suffered by Black South Africa. This relationship is best reflected by the attitude of Afrikaans-speaking students who uphold White supremacy and, almost unanimously, support the ruling Nationalist Party. However, there have been faint glimmerings of criticism among small sections of

Afrikaans students at Stellenbosch and Pretoria Universities, which suggest a distaste for the Government's interference on the campuses. This would have been unheard of a few years ago.

English-speaking students, although generally more prosperous in origin than Afrikaans students, vary from the largely indifferent and apathetic to the critical in the attitudes they adopt towards the regime. The basis for this is to be found in the historical political and economic rivalry of Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africa. After a long and bitter feud with British Imperialism and its English-speaking connections in South Africa, Afrikaner capital finally won political control in 1948 on the basis of the narrow nationalism it invoked. Whilst the Afrikaans universities are obsessed with their Christian National God, and inculcate the virtues of racial exclusiveness, the English-language universities attempt, or pretend, to remain faithful to the 19th Century liberal values upon which they were founded.

Limited though such an environment is, it certainly makes the English-speaking students more open-minded than the rest of White South Africa. At university they tend to be out-of-step with White 'baasskap' thought, and seek some contact — difficult though it is — with Black students; as graduates they enter the world of commerce, industry and the professions, soon claiming the suburban house with swimming pool, double-garage and retinue of servants. Some sickened by the system opt-out and emigrate abroad. Just a handful have had the capacity to merge their interests with those of the African people, and have paid the price in terms of imprisonment and exile. However, at no previous stage have students from this group been involved in anti-government demonstrations as is being seen today. In addition these protests are tending to be more lively, critical and vociferous. We need to explain the reasons for this new phenomenon and look to the direction in which it might lead.

The insignificant number of Black students attending university reflects the basic racial inequalities found in every facet of the country's life. The chances of a Black

South African gaining a university place are extremely remote. It is estimated that 0.05 % of Africans attain some university education. For every 100,000 in the population group concerned, 886 Whites, 352 Indians, 74 Coloured, and 13 Africans, reach Standard 10 — when pupils are eligible to take their university entrance examinations.* Secondary school pupils who gain a university entrance certificate are pigeon-holed to Fort Hare if of Xhosa descent, to Turfloop in the Transvaal if Sotho, to Ngoya if Zulu, to Salisbury Island, Durban, if Indian, and to the College of the Western Cape if Coloured in origin. Respective enrolment at these dispersed 'bush' colleges is 451 at Fort Hare (1968 figure), 641 at Turfloop (1969), 371 at Ngoya (1968), 1,701 at Salisbury Island (1969), and 351 (1962) at the College of the Western Cape. An additional 450 Black students are enrolled at Natal University which operates a 'Non-European Section' in a dilapidated Durban building, 3 miles from the White campus.

This system of education far from attempting to universalise knowledge and experience seeks to artificially preserve the identity of each racial group in accordance with the Government's policy of separate development. The purpose is to maintain the traditional Black-White relations in South Africa or as the Government spokesmen put it, 'to preserve the European and his civilization in this multi-racial land'. The enforced isolation, and stifling environment of the tribal colleges condemns the Black student to an inferior system of higher education. Black graduates have next to no prospects, but are faced with a dearth of jobs in the Bantustans, and with job reservation, discriminatory pay and influx control in the White areas. Unless he leaves the country the Black graduate does not achieve a status very different to the rest of his people. He is still looked upon with contempt and expected to maintain a servile attitude to even the most ignorant of Whites.

Black students, like their counterparts elsewhere in the colonial world, are likely to participate in the revolutionary

---

* *Bantu Education to 1968,* a South African Race Relations publication, by Muriel Horrell.

struggle to overthrow apartheid and liberate South Africa. This is the reason why so many African graduates, like Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, have gone on to play outstanding roles in the liberatory struggle, and why the revolt of the tribal colleges is of far greater significance than the protests on the White campuses. The South African educational system, as with all the other relationships stemming from White domination, exhibits the characteristics of what the South African Communist Party terms 'colonialism of a special type': where the oppressing White nation occupies the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lives side by side with them.

> On one level, that of 'White South Africa', there are all the features of an advanced capitalist state in its final stage of imperialism ... But on another level, that of 'Non-White South Africa', there are all the features of a colony ... It is this combination of the worst features both of imperialism and colonialism, which determines the special nature of the South African system ...*

The respective roles and contribution of Black and White students can only be understood in the light of such a perspective. It explains why Black and White students, although more or less in simultaneous protest, are operating at two different levels. In the one instance there is the Black student inevitably involved in the struggle for the national emancipation of his people; in the other instance there is the student from the dominant racial group, not unlike the White American protester, who is growing sick with the rotteness of his society.

We quite correctly stress that the powerhouse of the South African revolution is the struggle of the African people. We must not turn a blind eye to the revulsion which sections of White students are developing for South African society, nor should we scoff at their efforts for not being radical enough. If American society is turning inward on itself over the war in Vietnam, then might not 'White South Africa' — an imperialist state in its own right — display similar convulsions when it is faced with the revolt of its

---

* *The Road to South African Freedom,* Programme of the South African Communist Party.

own 'Black Vietnam'? Are not White students showing right now that White South Africa is far from the monolith people presumed?

U.C.T. SIT-IN AND FORT HARE LOCK-OUT

Black students were barred from the English-language universities by government decree in 1959. In fact only the Universities of Cape Town (U.C.T.) and Witwatersrand ('Wits') had admitted members of all races, even then observing segregation in social and sporting events. The University of Natal was not affected as it already operated its own full segregation; it has in fact three geographical separate faculties, two for Whites in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and the third 'Non-European Section' in Durban. By ending racial inter-mixing the Government hoped to enforce an acceptance in reluctant quarters of apartheid policies, and at once proceeded with the creation of the tribal institutions.

Only Fort Hare, with a proud and independent academic record, attracting students from all over Southern Africa and beyond, had been in existence at that stage, and it was debased overnight into a tribal college for Xhosas by a Government Transfer Act. The Government expected through State control and systematic indoctrination, to retard the militancy of African students and create tame flunkies to administer the 'Bantu homelands'. These moves were fiercely resisted, particularly at Fort Hare where the Government-appointed Principal, Professor Ross, was pelted with tomatoes when he arrived to take up his position in October 1959. Fort Hare has been under virtual police control ever since. At the same time the English-language universities 'mourned' the murder of academic freedom by staging joint student-staff processions in the cities.

The current wave of protests, nearly ten years later, are an infuriating challenge to Government policy and indicate that militancy, far from being curbed, has in fact accelerated. Whilst the Government boasted that all was 'peace and quiet' on the campuses, and that the tribal colleges were the 'pride and joy' of their people, the students were about to

explode the lie. When 1,000 U.C.T. students streamed into their administration block on August 16, 1968 and occupied it for several days, the significance of the action was not only in the fact that it marked a new spirit of militancy, or that this represented South Africa's first sit-in demonstration, but rather the target at which the protest was aimed.

The students' loathing for apartheid policy was on the increase, but for the first time criticism was levelled — not at the Government alone — but at the so-called liberal University Council. The controversy arose when the U.C.T. Council appointed an African, Mr. Archie Mafeje, as senior lecturer in Social Anthropology, but later revoked the decision on Government insistence. The students were furious that their Council, who claimed to champion academic freedom, should co-operate in such a blatant act of racial discrimination rather than let the Government do its own dirty work. The general feeling of disgust was expressed by Professor Maurice Pope, of the Classics Department, who resigned and returned to England. 'The University should have closed down as some German Universities did under Hitler', he said, 'or at least it should renounce its title until such time as it had regained its autonomy, and go back to using its former name of the South African College.'

Solidarity demonstrations with the sit-in students quickly spread to the other campuses, despite threats from Vorster that he would intervene if the protests did not end. Wits students massed outside their gates in a defiant gesture when the City Council, acting on Vorster's instructions, banned their proposed march through the heart of Johannesburg. Counter-demonstrators hurled insults and rotten eggs while police stood by. The President of the Wits Student Representative Council declared: 'Students have now entered a new era of protest in this country... which are the start of nation-wide demands for a greater student say in the running of the universities... students were sick and tired of interference and would not be deterred by Mr. Vorster or anyone else.' A deputation of Wits students who attempted to see the Prime Minister in Pretoria were met by police with dogs, and Afrikaans-speaking students who beat them up.

Within a fortnight the focus of attention shifted dramatically to Fort Hare. The White student front, seething with excitement and life, awoke with shock to the realisation that the plight of their remote African colleagues was far worse than theirs. On August 16, the day the U.C.T. sit-in began, the Government was attempting to quietly install a new rector, Professor J. M. de Wet, at Fort Hare. The students boycotted the ceremony, which was addressed by Blaar Coetzee for the Government, and political slogans were painted on the college walls. These were directed at Dr. Verwoerd, Vorster and Coetzee, and included 'Fort Hare for Africans not for Afrikaners' and 'Mafeje for U.C.T.' Subsequently 17 students were arbitrarily singled out by the Rector and held responsible for the defiance. They were taken away by the Security Police for interrogation and their rooms were searched. On 5th September, students boycotted their lectures in sympathy and staged a sit-down strike outside the administration block. On 6th September, the Rector suspended all those participating in the siege and gave them until 3 p. m. to disperse. At 3.05 p. m. 300 students (two-thirds of the student body) had refused to budge. Lustily singing freedom songs they were promptly surrounded by scores of police with dogs and equipped with teargas bombs and gasmasks. Chanting and singing 296 students were marched from the campus, placed on Railway buses and sent home. When about 100 of the students arrived in Johannesburg they were met by relatives and friends who sang 'Nkosi Sikelel' i-Afrika', the national anthem of the African National Congress.

The second wave of anti-government protests within a month followed at the English-language universities. At Wits police swooped on a 200-strong student picket, confiscated placards and took the names of those participating, who stood by singing 'We Shall Overcome'. Vigils and mass meetings supporting the expelled students and demanding their reinstatement were held at U.C.T., Rhodes and Natal. At Wits some of the Fort Hare students addressed a mass meeting and explained the causes leading to the strike. The students said they saw the College's administration as an

extension of the system of separate development which they completey opposed. They explained that at a tribal college they were caught between the urge to question, which is the essence of education, and a system which makes certain questions dangerous. Police presence on the campus was a thorny issue, students felt 'they were under almost constant surveilance by the Special Branch or student spies for signs of political dissent.' Fort Hare was like a Dickensian boarding-school with 'the people most hated' by the students being the African wardens who enforced discipline and the hostel rules. They used duplicate keys to search students' rooms, patrolled late at night, and made sure that no liquor or women were in the male quarters.

One student, told a Johannesburg newspaper that the Fort Hare confirmed his students' impression of him when he dents were children and did not know what they were doing. 'At Fort Hare, we are living a quaint life in a quaint place, our lecturers being strange people with whom we have no contact at all except in the classrooms.' The Rector of Fort Hare confirmed his student's impression of him when he declared that the 'Fort Hare students might have been influenced by world student unrest' and 'the demonstrations could also have been timed to coincide with the new session of the United Nations.' The White students were warned by the Minister of Bantu Education, Mr. M. C. Botha, that the affairs of Fort Hare did not concern them. But there was no turning back now, the events at U.C.T. and Fort Hare were beginning to crystalize the components of united and committed action.

THE ROLE OF NUSAS

The protests have been organised and co-ordinated on a national scale by the 24,000-strong National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). African students and White democrats have often been critical of NUSAS for its general European orientation, its moderate approach, its refusal to take a general political stand outside the university sphere, and its failure to identify with the liberatory movement. Its liberal stand on academic freedom, however, has made it a pet-hate of the Prime Minister. In recent years it has come

under increasing fire as one of the last remaining liberal institutions left in South Africa. Since 1966 its presidents and several office-bearers have been banned, deported or forced to leave the country on one-way exit visas. The Government has been threatening to ban the organisation if it does not come to heel. In order to defend itself NUSAS has had to seek more active support on the campuses. This occurred when the English-speaking campuses were beginning to shrug-off the apathy and indifference of the past. The new mood among White students is influenced to a degree by world student unrest.

White South African students, who have been led to believe that Britain and the U.S.A. represent model systems, are perplexed when they see middle class students, not unlike themselves, in a state of almost continuous revolt with capitalist society. This has led to a reassessment of their own ideas and a more perceptive awareness of the power structure of South African society. During 1968 many teach-ins and debates were held on 'Student Power', 'The Role of the University' and 'The Future of South Africa'. Many students began to demand a greater say in the running of the universities and coupled this with demands for the readmission of Black students.

NUSAS was keeping abreast with this new mood and organised many such discussions. It took a stand against the rebel Smith regime; quite a courageous act in South Africa. In June it sustained a powerful, government-incited, attack by right-wing students who called for the disaffiliation of the Wits, UCT and Pietermaritzburg students' unions. NUSAS emerged from this test with increased support as the move was heavily defeated in hotly-contested campus elections. In the words of the President, the Government's attacks 'made NUSAS in the past few years far stronger than it had been for some time'.

In July, at its national congress, NUSAS expressed its belief that the ideas for which the late Chief Albert Lutuli stood 'will ultimately triumph in South Africa'. A resolution was passed praising Helen Joseph for 'her courage and perseverance' under house-arrest, and the Congress reaffirmed NUSAS opposition to Ian Smith. In a resolution dealing with

'terrorism' (sic), NUSAS expressed its 'horror' at acts of violence — but at the same time, its 'belief that Government policies fostered acts of terrorism by oppressing a large section of the population'.

There have still been bitter feelings from Black students for NUSAS; or more accurately for certain NUSAS affiliates. Delegates from the 'Non-European Section' of Natal University made a protest withdrawal from the July Congress when the Pietermaritzburg delegate was making his report. A breach in relations had been brought about between these two faculties of Natal University when the Pietermaritzburg students organised a segregated graduation ball. The Black students issued a statement condemning Pietermaritzburg for 'going completely against the basic policy of NUSAS, which is based on non-racialism'. Relations between Black and White students at Natal University have remained strained over issues such as this.

There are some Black students who are growing so hostile that they do not wish to work with any Whites. There has been a move to establish a South African Students Organisation (SASO) along NUSAS lines for Black students. An inaugural meeting was held at Marianhill at the end of last year, but not all who attended seemed sure about the effectiveness of such a body. There have of course been similar attempts to found such an organisation before, but these have floundered owing to financial and organisational problems. It would be extremely significant if SASO could survive and grow, but the difficulties may prove too great at the moment.

I feel however that Black Students should not turn their backs on NUSAS, particularly at this crucial stage of the struggle. Black students should have their own organisation but also work with NUSAS. White students are showing themselves more responsive to the demands of Black students than ever before. Black students have the potential to swing NUSAS and the White students into more radical positions. The danger of isolating the more moderate NUSAS leadership might bring it into a position of compromise with the Government.

This almost occurred when the NUSAS leadership offered to drop nationwide protests they were in the process of organising if the Minister of Police, Mr. S. L. Muller, would agree to see them. Muller, of course, complied and instead of staging the protests which were against police activity on the campuses, and the increasing use of informers and spies, the NUSAS leadership discussed these points with the Minister of Police himself. A very conciliatory meeting was held and the Press hailed the occasion as a 'New Era in Government-NUSAS relations'. The meeting took place in February this year, during the long summer vacation. There was a great deal of confusion and disquiet among White students and at Wits there was particularly strong resentment against the manoeuvre. When the academic year began in March a NUSAS leader from Cape Town had to fly to Johannesburg and calm the Wits students down. Fortunately the Government's typical hamhandedness saved the situation, for Vorster, Muller and other Ministers were soon back to the attack, slating and threatening the students in highly repetitive speeches.

PROTESTS PROTESTS PROTESTS

The mistrust of Black students for NUSAS seemed confirmed by the Muller interview. It certainly underlined the limitations of NUSAS, but it also indicated that a section of White students, particularly at Wits, were far ahead in their militancy of the national leadership. NUSAS now prepared for its next big campaign of nationwide demonstrations. These were to commemorate the English-language Universities' dedication to academic freedom made ten years previously at the time of the Government's Extension of the Universities Act of 1959. A week of re-dedication was organised involving vigils, pickets, marches, and climaxing in general assemblies and public meetings at the four English-language Universities on April 16.

It is estimated that more than 10,000 students took part in these protests, including students from the Johannesburg and Natal Teachers' Training Colleges. The demonstrations

were marked by a show of respectability on the one hand, involving all but one of the Principals of the Universities concerned, who signed the students' petition for academic freedom, and a vicious show of force by the Government on the other hand, with attacks on the students by Vorster's fascist thugs. Both the Johannesburg and Cape Town City Councils, again toeing the Vorster line, refused to allow marches through the city streets, on the grounds that 'these would provoke disorders'.

At Wits the students maintained a grim 24-hour-a-day picket for the entire week along the boundary of their campus (the busy Jan Smuts Avenue). Students were assaulted by hooligans and provoked by the police but they courageously held their ground. On one occasion when only ten students, including six girls, were manning the picket, 100 rowdies from the Air Force Training School near Pretoria, descended on the thin line, attacked the students and set their posters alight. But the biggest act of thuggery was perpetrated by the South African Police. One morning they arrested six pickets for parading outside the University grounds. When other students heard what had happened hundreds flocked out of the University and took up positions along Jan Smuts Avenue. 'Protect us from our police' their placards read. In mid-afternoon, at peak traffic hour, Jan Smuts Avenue was sealed-off by troop carriers and police vans. 200 policemen, with dogs and batons descended on the students and drove them back into the University. Students sang and chanted 'Sieg Heil' and 'Gestapo'.

During what must rank as the stormiest week in the experience of Wits, 19 other students were arrested and appeared in the courts on trivial offences, including three 17 year-olds who had to appear in a court for juveniles. At the end of the campaign the president of NUSAS, Duncan Innes, summed-up the feeling of students when he said: 'We know our universities can never be integrated until our society is integrated. We feel that apartheid is the cause of all that is wrong with South Africa.' Innes went on to indicate that there would be more nationwide demonstrations: 'Our opposition to apartheid is only beginning' he stated.

The struggle moves forward

No state can indefinitely rule when its power rests on the compulsion of the gun and the boot. Of the Fort Hare students sent home, all but 21 were readmitted, but under the most humiliating circumstances. Within a month the slogans were back on the walls: 'We want 21', 'Stamp out police informers' and 'Academic freedom'. At U.C.T. the Mafeje episode had an epilogue. In December 1968 the Chancellor of the University, mining magnate and financier Harry Oppenheimer, arrived to unveil a plaque commemorating the whole sorry affair. Students picketed the ceremony and held placards which stated: 'Plaques don't cure plagues', 'U.C.T. Council legislates for apartheid', and 'plaques — palliatives for hypocrites'.

These two incidents illustrate two important factors. One, that the Black students, and thus the African people, are unconquerable. With the development of the armed struggle the most dynamic forces will be unleashed which will overthrow apartheid. Two, that there is a strong feeling of moral revulsion against apartheid among White students. The liberatory movement must not lose this source of potential support. Already the demonstrations planned for the end of May show a profound development within the student movement over the past year. The demonstrations are becoming more political, they are looking outwards from the university sphere and are finding links with other sections of the Black community. As regards the attitude of Black students to NUSAS it is interesting to note that the 450 critical students of Natal's 'Non European Section' are playing a full part in arrangements for the protests. One of the demands of the Turfloop students is the right to affiliate with NUSAS. Black students, a minority though they may be, can exercise a tremendous influence on the White students. They can maintain and develop the democratic and radical mood which has prevented White students from allying with the forces of reaction. This is part of the struggle on the road to South Africa freedom.

CHE IN BOLIVIA

Joe Slovo

WHEN C. I. A.-COMMANDED THUGS wearing the Barrientos uniform murdered Che Guevara on the 7th October, 1967, the guerrilla band which he led had been in the field for exactly 11 months.

Those who look for comic book drama should keep away from Che's *Diaries** for in them they will find reflected with characteristic integrity and modesty the reality and not the dream-picture of what faces men who do this kind of battle. As in his Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War, the pages of his Bolivian Diaries are punctuated with the stark reality of life in the mountains. Hunger, thirst, sickness, discomfort and deprivation — these are constant companions of the guerrilla and they ceaselessly play upon his morale. They compete with the qualities of dedication and selflessness which move men to abandon their all and offer their very lives in pursuit of an ideal.

'The day was very very laborious ..... Everything went wrong ..... The day was spent in a desperate search for a way out..... A grey day full of anguish ..... An unpleasant day and quite full of anguish ..... We quenched our thirst with cakes of caracari, which just fooled the throat ..... Some of the comrades .. are falling to pieces from lack of water.'

These entries on different days of only one week in August 1967 spell out the realities of guerrilla life and the nobility of spirit of those who, at the end of the day, manage to defy them.

When Che 'hit the road with my shield upon my arm' he had no illusions about his personal future. 'It is possible that this may be the finish' he wrote in mid-1965 in a farewell

* Che Guevara's Bolivian Diaries, London, Cape, 12s. 6.

letter to his parents. 'I don't seek it, but it's within the logical realm of probabilities. If it should be so, I send you a last embrace. I have loved you very much, only I haven't known how to express my fondness. I am extremely rigid in my actions..... please just take me at my word today.' Che's self denigration and deeply-felt but characteristically understaded compassion for the 'little mare' whom he struck in a moment of temper because it was moving too slowly due to weariness is an example of his deep humanity. That night he brought his men together. He talked of the difficult situation. 'A human carcass' was the way he described his own condition.

> The episode of the little mare proves that at some moments I have lost control; that will be modified but the situation must weigh squarely on everybody and whoever does not feel capable of sustaining it should say so. It is one of those moments when great decisions must be taken; this type of struggle gives us the opportunity not anly to turn ourselves into revolutionaries, the highest level of the human species, but it also allows us to graduate as men; those who cannot reach either one of these two stages should say so and leave the struggle.

This compassion, resilience and nobility of spirit was of course not unique to the Cuban struggle nor to the short-lived Bolivian campaign. It had its historical precedents in Russia, in China, in the Phillippines, in Viet-Nam, in Algeria, in Nazi-occupied Europe and many other countries in which men were forced to resort to arms to assert a people's right to freedom. And each of these struggles – some successful and some not – has thrown up its heroes both sung and unsung.

HIS INTERNATIONALISM

Why then has Che Guevara more than anyone else become the symbol of the heroic guerrilla amongst so many militants, particularly the student youth of the West? Is it perhaps that in him is seen the special quality of internationalism which moves a man to sacrifice his life in any part of the world for any people who struggle for freedom and against imperialism? Che, the Argentinian, had already taken part in revolutionary struggles in Guatamala when he joined Castro's band in Mexico. As one of the twelve who

survived the seemingly impossible landing on the Cuban coast he marched into Havana at Castro's side at the head a victorious people's army, having proved himself a brilliant guerrilla commander. Not for him what some might consider the well deserved reward of public office. He wrote to Castro in April 1965 a moving farewell letter in which he formally renounced his positions in the national leadership of the Cuban Communist Party, his post as minister, his rank as major and his Cuban citizenship. He proclaimed that his only ties were those 'which cannot be broken as appointments can!' He left Cuba with the feeling 'of fulfilling the most sacred of duties; to fight against imperialism wherever it may be'. Before his final Bolivian campaign he was ready to involve himself in Africa on the side of the freedom forces.

In an age in which the virus of sectionalism and chauvinism infects even some sections of the international working class movement and the Socialist world, this quality of internationalism, this assertion of the essential unity of man in the struggle against oppression and for true freedom and independence, is to be treasured. In the words of Fidel Castro, 'National flags, prejudices, chauvinism, and egoism had disappeared from his mind and heart. And he was ready to shed his generous blood spontaneously and immediately, on behalf of any people, for the cause of any people.' All hail then to the spirit that moved the volunteers in Spain, the Pomeroys in the Philippines, the Guevaras in Bolivia!

Che's internationalism and his virtuosity in the field of guerrilla tactics and the art of commanding men are qualities which will continue to inspire revolutionaries. But Che was not only a practitioner — a man who, in his words, risked his skin to prove his platitudes; he also made a notable contribution as a theorist of guerrilla struggle in contemporary conditions.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY

Generalising from the Cuban experience, in his book *Guerrilla Warfare,* he stressed that one does not necessarily have to wait for the classical revolutionary situation to

arise; it can be created. He was critical of those who 'feel the need to wait until, in some perfect way. all the required objective and subjective conditions are at hand.' These thoughts were part of the debate triggered off by the victory of the Cuban people and they no doubt helped to motivate his Bolivan decision.

Out-of-context and mechanical adherence to rigid formulae about the laws of revolution, regardless of changing conditions, had doubless acted as an obstacle to revolutionary initiative by some vanguard parties and had blunted their ability to recognise when the real moment of struggle had arrived. The Cuban Revolution and one of its important theorists, Che Guevara, stimulated new thinking on this problem by revolutionaries everywhere but particularly in Latin America. The fact that revolutionaries had taken to arms in a situation which seemed to fall short of the much distorted thesis of Lenin's on the timing of an insurrection was not new.*

China in the twenties did not present a classical type revolutionary situation, yet no-one can today question the correctness of the decision to take to arms in the protracted struggle which only saw final success in 1949. When the series of explosions heralded the small beginnings of armed struggle in Algeria in 1954 it would have been difficult to find the ingredients of an immediate insurrectionary situation. When Amilcar Cabral and his colleagues of the P. A. I. G. C. decided to prepare for armed revolt in 1959 they did so against the background of the brutal repression by the Portuguese of a dock-workers' strike and not because a revolutionary breakthrough seemed imminent.

The Cuban Revolution was in the same tradition. But like every other major social upheaval it has its own significance and its own lessons; it becomes part of the storehouse of

---

* Lenin's thesis dealt with the problems of a general insurrection and not the way in which a revolutionary organisation can by its political and organisational work help to create favourable objective conditions for the conequest of power. For a fuller discussion of this problem see my article on Regis Debray in *The African Communist* No 33 (Second Quarter 1968)

revolutionary experience and revolutionary thought. For Latin America it was the watershed. Nothing thereafter could be the same again.

It was Che who articulated the growing importance of the subjective factor in the quest for people's power. As such his influence in Latin America and on our own struggle was significant. In the discussions which preceded the decision to prepare for armed confrontation in South Africa, the Cuban Revolution and the writings of Che figured prominently.

Thus in the amalgam of experience and analysis which makes of Marxism a living guide to social action and not a petrified dogma, Che, who was proud to call himself a Marxist and a Communist, has an honourable place.

This is said advisedly and not as a formal bow in the direction of propriety which precedes the awkward path of having to express reservations about aspects of his thesis so soon after his heroic self-sacrifice. I feel the need to say this is in itself a commentary on certain unhealthy features of some assessments of Che.

On the one hand there is the ungenerous tendency to belittle his importance by paying homage to his courage but not treating critically and seriously his theoretical contributions. This unbalanced treatment diminishes the man. On the other hand there is the emotion-packed pressure to guard one's criticism lest one is accused of lending volume to the babble from the enemy that Che's physical elimination spells the permanent defeat of Bolivian resistance and the guerrilla tactic as a form of struggle in Latin America. We must discard both of these strait-jackets. At the end of the day it is our capacity to build on the positive foundation and to reject the negative features of revolutionary activists and thinkers, which will spell success. As long as there is balance and honesty in our discussions, enemy gloating about miscalculations and mistakes is of little relevance. They will gain far more from a stubborn refusal of the revolutionary movement to discuss them openly and to draw the right lessons. Che's Bolivian campaign needs to be examined in the light of these considerations.

The fact that he did not succeed* does not provide a conclusive answer to the question whether his decision to begin was justified. War, like politics, is not the province of certainty. 'History', said Karl Marx in a letter to Kugelmann, 'would indeed be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances.' Yet this truism does not imply that success or failure is governed purely by the laws of chance. An unfortunate or unexpected twist in a developing situation may radically influence the outcome but the course adopted must have its roots in the real situation and be guided by the scientific principles of revolutionary theory.

Without detracting from the nobility of the participants I believe that we must express doubt about the correctness of Che Guevara's Bolivian action. The question which presents itself immediately upon reading his *Diaries* is : was there not too mechanical an application of the correct proposition that the subjective factor can help stimulate or create insurrectionary conditions?

Guerrilla warfare is above all a political struggle by means which include armed activities. It cannot be won by soldiers alone. Armed groups, however heroic, have not the slightest chance of surviving in isolation from the general stream of political ferment and organisation in the country. It is clear from his writings, more particularly his *Guerrilla Warfare* that Che Guevara fully appreciated this.

'For the individual guerrilla warrior then, whole hearted help from the local population is the basis on which to start — popular support is indispensible', he says. He draws a contrast with a robber band which he says often possesses all the characteristics of a guerrilla band but inevitable gets caught and wiped out because 'they lack one thing, the support of the people.' And again.

---

* In the narrow sense of course. In the long run the Bolivian people will win their freedom and in one sense every act of resistance whether prudent or not, will have contributed to this.

the base and grounding of the guerrilla is the people. One cannot imagine small armed groups, no matter how mobile and familiar with the terrain, surviving the organised persecution of a well-equipped army without this powerful assistance.

NO POPULAR SUPPORT

It is more than clear from a reading of his *Diaries* that the greatest obstacle to the survival of his guerrilla group in Bolivia was its failure to win popular support and its almost complete and utter isolation from the Bolivian masses – peasantry and workers alike. Let Che himself speak. It becomes relevant to quote extensively from his Diaries on this point.

> The Bolivians are fine, although they are few in number.
> — *Monthly Analysis, end of December 1966.*

> A period of the beginning of the enemy counter-offensive which has been characterised up until now by: a.) a tendency to establish control that would isolate us, b.) a clamouring on a national and international level, c.) total ineffectiveness up until now, d.) mobilisation of the peasants.
> — *Monthly Analysis, end of March 1967.*

> ... the isolation continues to be complete ... the peasant base is still not being formed, although it seams that through planned terror, we can neutralise most of them; support will come later. Not one person has joined up with us.
> — *Monthly Analysis, end of April 1967.*

> The most important characteristics are: ... 2.) a complete lack of incorporation of the peasants, although they are losing their fear of us, and we are succeednig in winning their admiration. It's a slow and patient task.
> — *Monthly Analysis, end of June, 1967.*

> The most important characteristics are: 2.) We continue to feel the lack of peasant incorporation. It is a vicious circle: to obtain this incorporation we need to carry out permanent action in populated territory, and to do this we need more men ... 7.) the army continues to be nil with respect to military tasks, but they are working on the peasants in a way that must not be underestimated, as they transform all the members of the community into informers, whether by fear or by deceiving them with respect to our objective.
> — *Monthly Analysis, end of June, 1967.*

The lack of incorporation of the peasants continues to be felt, although there are some encouraging signs in the reception given to us by old peasant acquaintances.

— *Monthly Analysis, end of July, 1967.*

We continue without any incorporation on the part of the peasants, logical to understand if we take into account the little contact we have had with them in recent times.

— *Monthly Analysis, end of August, 1967.*

The characteristics are the same as those of last month, except that now the army is showing more effectiveness in action, and the mass of the peasants do not help us at all and have become informers.

— *Monthly Analysis, end of September, 1967.*

A pig was killed, sold by Sostenes Vargas, the only peasant who stayed in his house. The others flee whey see us.

— *September 24th, 1967.*

Thus, in the whole of this period, not a single peasant was inspired to come forward to bear arms. On the contrary, so wide was the gap between the guerilla band and the people around them that even the hope expressed at the end of April, 1967 that they could be neutralised through terror and that support would come later, did not prove realistic. This was the sorry, demoralising and, for the guerrilla, devastating picture seven days before Che's capture and murder.

CAN MILITARY ACTION ALONE MOBILISE THE MASSES?

The planned terror against the enemy forces had been on a relatively large and relatively successful scale. It was carried out with a skill which once again reflected Che's virtuosity in this field. The first engagement occurred towards the second half of March, 1967. Thereafter numerous engagements took place in which the enemy was badly punished. (e.g. four in April, three in May, two in June, three in July). The propaganda media of the enemy appear not to have avoided publicity about the presence of the guerrillas and their exploits. If anything it tended to exaggerate their strength and made scrupulous admissions about their own losses which in some of the battles were heavy.

The masses of the peasants were therefore well aware of the presence of a guerrilla centre and of its exploits over a

period of many months. Here was a practical demonstration of the guerrilla centre's capacity to deal blows against the enemy in organised armed confrontation. According to Che's entry at the end of June, 1967, 'the guerrilla legend grows and grows: we are now invincible supermen', and at the end of July, 'the legend of the guerrilla is acquiring continental dimensions.'

Despite all this, the peassants initial indifference developed into fear and finally into colloboration with the enemy. Che speculates in his *Diaries* about the reasons for the almost total shunning by the peasants of the guerilla and in many instances their positive hostility. Was it due to fear? Was it due to the fact that the peasants had been misled about the guerrilla objects?

Whatever the immediate cause may have been (and some extremely hard words are said by Che about the role of the Communist Party of Bolivia, one thing is crystal clear. The doctrine that the masses will, in some spontaneous way, respond to an insurrectionary centre — a military foco — needs serious re-examination. The Bolivian campaign surely puts in grave doubt the over-generalised formulations that the injection of armed groups into a country in which there is severe repression will of itself (and subject mainly to the professional skill of the armed groups) slowly, in the words of Debray 'spread like an oil patch'.

I am not here arguing a brief for the tradition-bound reluctance to concede the importance in some situations of actually establishing an armed centre as one *the* vital steps in the all-round preparation for armed struggle. *But this is a far cry from the thesis that a group of heroic patriots, most of them unfamiliar with the local terrain and local dialect and without any roots amongst the people or proper contact with their organisations, can become the catalyst of revolutionary transformation.*

NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM — THE IDEAL AND THE REALITY

The participants in Che's group numbered just over forty. There was only a handful of Bolivians and the majority

were freedom fighters from Cuba (17), Peru, Brazil and Argentina.

The composition of the guerrilla band must have contributed to the relative ease with which the enemy isolated it from the peasantry. This is of course not the first example of outsiders participating in freedom struggles and even playing a leading role. In his introduction to the *Diaries,* Fidel Castro draws special attention to the fact that in Latin America the internationalist tradition has historic roots and points to the names of Bolivia and its capital, Sucre, which were both named in honour of their first liberators who were Venezuelan. But Bolivia has witnessed one of the first attempts in more recent history to initiate this sort of struggle by a group led and predominated by outsiders. It is not a concession to 'nationalism' or 'the sectarian spirit' to question whether, especially in the early stages, a guerrilla group should be predominantly non-indigenous in composition. Would this not make the already intricate problem of achieving acceptance from the people far more complex and, in some cases, impossible?

The political terrain in which a revolutionary movement operates is given and is seldom, if ever, a reflection of the ideals of the advanced vanguard. Narrow nationalism, provincialism, regionalism, tribalism — these prejudices nurtured by objective conditions certainly constitute limitations on a people's capacity to struggle. They have particular force in the modern era of imperialism and the bourgeois national State, one of whose characteristic historical features is the emergence of nationalism.

This reality precludes the mechanical application of advanced principles of internationalism in many situations, not only in national struggles but in the working class movement as well. Even after the capture of power the historically-rooted national differences have an important bearing on tactics. Lenin had this in mind when in *'Left-Wing' Communism* he discussed the creation of a leading centre to replace the Second International.

> ... Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account ... the *specific feature* which (the) struggle assummes and inevitably must assume in each separate country

in conformity with the peculiar features of its economics, politics, culture, national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions and so on and so forth . . . We must clearly realise that such a leading centre cannot under any circumstances be built on stereotyped, mechanically equalised and identical rules of struggle. As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries — and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale — the unity of international tactics of the Communist working class movement demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment) . . .
We must not regard what is obsolete for us as . . . being obsolete for the masses . . . You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois democratic and parliamentary prèjudices — prejudices. But at the same time you must *soberly* follow the *actual* state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only its Communist vanguard), of all the toiling masses (not only of their advanced elements).
(emphasis in original)

Particularly in that part of the world (and our experience of Africa confirms this) where oppression and manipulation by imperialism have wrought so much material and moral damage there is an understandable suspicion amongst large sections of the people against the 'foreigner' and the outsider. This historically-rooted prejudice is hypocritically exploited by imperialism and its local representatives to confuse the people and to undermine their resistance. The cry of 'foreign agitator' is one of the oldest in the book. Its impact on a ravaged people, especially where it can be superficially documented — as in Bolivia — must not be underestimated and tactics of struggle must take it into account. Even the vanguard group itself is not altogether and always free of this factor as appears for example from an entry in the *Diaries* on April 12th 1967:

A tendency to underestimate the Cubans was observed among the vanguard when Camba remarked that every day he has less confidence in the Cubans due to an incident with Ricardo.

A very pointed example of the need to accommodate a movement's tactics to the character of the struggle and to the reality of the political terrain is contained in Che's *Re-*

miniscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War. In the course of a tribute to the Guatamalan patriot, Julio Valle (El Patojo), Che mentions the fact that when El Patojo heard of the intended Cuban action he voluteered to join Castro's band in Mexico. His offer was not accepted for the reason that 'Fidel did not want to bring any more foreigners into that struggle for national liberation in which I had the honour to participate.' What developments have taken place in Latin America since then which would warrant a departure from the correct thesis which must obviously have been at the bottom of Castro's decision in the case of El Patojo?

This of course is no argument against patriots participating (even in leading capacities) in a life and death struggle outside the borders of their own country as Che did in Cuba or our own heroes are doing in Zimbabwe. Che says 'Each spilt drop of blood, in any country under whose flag one has not been born is an experience passed on to others who suvive, to be added later to the liberation struggle of his own country. And each nation liberated is a phase won in the battle for the liberation of one's own country.' Absolutely true! But what is being discussed here are those tactics dictated by the predominant character of an existing situation which will most effectively organise and arouse an oppressed and often backward people to move in the direction of a conquest of power.

OUR OWN STRUGGLE

In our own struggle we have recently experienced some of the problems which face a guerrilla in a relatively alien environment. The historic alliance between ZAPU and the ANC heralded the beginnings of large-scale guerrilla operations in Zimbabwe in 1967. The armed units which engaged the enemy consisted of combined ZAPU-ANC freedom fighters. The common enemy facing both the South African and the Zimbabwe people is — more patently than elsewhere — one and the same. It is the white racialist regimes contiguously situated, acting in close co-operation and bolstered up by internal and external inmperialism. What is more, white South African troops were called into Zimbabwe

by the Smith regime and formed the backbone of the enemy forces.

Despite all this the leadership and composition of the guerrilla units reflected the reality of the struggle in Zimbabwe, the main content of which is the national liberation of the Zimbabwean people. The problem of establishing contact with the people and gaining their confidence and support would have been a thousand-fold more difficult, if not altogether impossible, if the units were led and numerically dominated by South African freedom fighters with no intimate knowledge of the local terrain, the people — their dialect, customs, habits, prejudices and so on. This is the experience of our fighting men and it relates to peoples facing not only the same enemy but having close ethnic, cultural and language ties.

The collaboration which led to the combined operations between ZAPU and the ANC is of course an inspiring example of internationalism and African unity. It constitutes an important milestone in the struggle against a common enemy united by racialism and imperialism. But even within the borders of our own country — South Africa — we would seriously jeopardise the chances of successfully initiating and sustaining guerrilla operations if in the constitution of the fighting units we did not give sufficient weight to local, ethnic, national and territorial loyalties and factors.

The unanswered question remains: Are there new objective conditions in Latin America as a whole and more specifically in Bolivia which render such factors obsolete for the mass of the people and not merely for the advanced vanguard?

NO COLLABORATION WITH BOLIVIAN ORGANISATIONS

The *Diaries* are limited to short-hand narratives of daily events, short monthly summaries of progress and brief memory-jogging reflections on certain trends and tendencies. It is understandable therefore that there is no mention in the *Diaries* of the factors which moved Che to choose Bolivia in preference to some other territory for the launching of the guerrilla centre. It seems clear however that

none of the existing political organisations inside Bolivia (including the Communist Party of Bolivia) were formally consulted about the action.

According to Fidel Castro, in the introduction, during the initial phase of preparation of the guerrilla base, Che had depended mainly upon a group of 'discreet collaborators' who remained in the Bolivian Communist Party after a split had occurred in it. According to Castro it was due to deference to these collaborators that Che invited Mario Monje, the General Secretary, to visit him in the camp although Che was not a bit sympathetic towards him. This meeting took place on the 31st December 1966.

In the brief description contained in the Diaries, Che summarises the fundamental questions raised by Monje as including an offer by him to resign from the leadership of the Party, obtain its neutrality to the guerrilla struggle and bring cadres for it. But the condition raised by Monje that 'the political and military leadership of the struggle would correspond to him as long as the revolution had a Bolivian environment' was totally rejected. The entry reads 'I would be the military chief and would not accept ambiguities concerning this. Here the discussion turned into a stalemate and ended up in a vicious circle'.

Castro asserts that Che's consultations with the head of the Bolivian Communist Party was in the nature of a gesture and was unaccompanied by any expectation that useful collaboration could be established. In fact in the monthly analysis at the end of December Che does say that Monje's attitude may 'hold back developments' but goes on to sigh with relief that it would also 'contribute . . . by releasing me of political entanglements'.

This last comment is consistent with what appears to have been Che's conviction that initially at any rate the military and political leadership ought to vest in the military or at the very least that the military ought to be absolutely independent. Also at the beginning the military band itself ought to avoid internal political organisation. On the 26th January 1967 when the Bolivian Moises Guevara arrived to join the group with a colleague, Che put

forward the condition which included 'group dissolution ... no political organisation yet and the necessity to avoid polemics about national and international discrepancies'.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP

For us this is an unfamiliar approach. In my article on Debray there is a more detailed and critical analysis of the formulations on these questions which he claims reflect the thinking of Che. In the words of Debray: 'In the phase preceding the seizure of power, the predominance of a political vanguard, the Party, over the military is not valid for Latin America' and 'the people's army will be the nucleus of the party and not vice versa'. Suffice it to say that in our continent such a proposition is rejected by all the liberation forces actually engaged in armed struggle including our own. The issue was dealt with succinctly and unambiguously by Cabral when he was asked:

'Could you tell us briefly how the political and military leadership of the struggle is carried out?'

The answer: 'The political and military leadership of the struggle is one: the political leadership. We are political people and our Party, a political organisation, leads the struggle in the civilian, political, administrative, technical and therefore also military spheres. Our fighters are defined as armed activists.'*

In any event the almost complete isolation of the guerilla band from any Bolivian political movement or organisation (none of whom appear to have been a party to the decision to commence guerrilla operations) obviously contributed to the set-backs suffered. On the 13th June 1967 the entry reads: 'The interesting thing is the political upheaval in the country, fabulous numbers of pacts and counterpacts that are in the air, seldom have the possibility of catalysing the guerrilla been seen so clearly.' And on the 14th of July: 'The government is disintegrating rapidly: too bad that we do not have a hundred more men at this moment.'

If the peasants are not ready to come forward who would provide these men? Who in any case would be in a position

* Tricontinental No 8 1968

to take full advantage of the ferment by all-round mobilisation of people in town and countryside? Surely the guerrilla centre, in the initial period, had almost by definition neither the capacity nor the physical possibility of doing so. In addition its contact with the outside world was so tenuous (a few documents and the government radio) that it would be quite unable to either weigh up the full signifiance of these events or to form a balanced judgement on what is to be done in the country as a whole. These questions are 'irrelevant' only to one who believes that mobilisation and response is generated exclusively by the exploits of the guerrilla. Surely the existence of a political leadership, intimately connected with the guerrilla centre and able to mobilise the masses, is of vital importance.

Historians with all the facts in their possession will, no doubt form their judgement, on the unhappy relationship between the guerrilla band and the Communist Party of Bolivia. One aspect however calls for comment: if in truth no genuine revolutionary organisation exists either willing or capable of throwing itself into this sort of struggle, this is an important factor in deciding whether conditions are ripe in that country to embark upon armed struggle.

These reflections provoked by reading of Che's *Diaries* touch on a number of vital problems of armed struggle to which our whole Movement is committed in Southern Africa. The problems connected with this struggle, its relationship with other forms of political activity, the need to give the military struggle a correct political content, our capacity to provide correct political guidance to the majority of workers and peasants who by the very nature of things cannot directly participate in the initial phases of guerrilla warfare — these are problems which are not academic exercises. Their correct solution can make the difference between success and failure, between real and a hollow victory.

Historically speaking what adds to the tragedy of Che's murder is that because he was such an honest, devoted and committed revolutionary fighter and thinker, the Bolivian experiences may well have evoked in him a further assessment of some of these problems, whose correct solution is vital to the revolutionary movement everywhere.

The I.C.U.

Teresa Zania

I will simply go from dockyard to factory and with a single word, 'STOP' the white people will be held at ransom, the railways will lose over £ 2.000,000 a day and while the trouble is on I will be looked upon as Prime Minister. (Kadalie, June, 1926).[1]

Are you going back to the masses and ask them to pray, or will you tell them to depend on their numerical powers... The idea of a general strike may make certain of you tremble in fear, but there is no alternative if you want your freedom. (Thomas Mbeki, April, 1927).[2]

THESE WORDS BY two leaders of the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union of Africa (I.C.U.) expressed the excitement of the African people in South Africa, at their discovery of a powerful new weapon, the strike, not only as a method to get higher wages and better working conditions, but as a political weapon. They are an indication, too, that Africans were putting aside their tribal differences and uniting as workers.

1. In a speech at Heilbron.
2. Thomas Mbeki at the 7th Annual I. C. U. Congress, Durban, April, 1927, quoted in Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope,* University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, p. 87.

The I.C.U. was formed in 1919 in Cape Town. From Cape Town it spread 'like a veld fire'[3] over South Africa, with Port Elizabeth and East London, seaport towns first, then to the country districts of the Cape, to Natal, Orange Free State, and in 1924, to Johannesburg and the Transvaal. It even spread its tentacles to South West Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Southern Rhodesia (where there was an I.C.U. branch until very recently), Portuguese East Africa and Nyasaland. Its membership grew, until in 1928, it was nearly a quarter of a million strong[4]. At its height it had an income of £ 15,000[5]. Not only did the urban areas build up a huge membership (Durban, according to A. W. G. Champion, another prominent I.C.U. leader, at the time of the Annual I.C.U. Conference in 1927, had a membership of 26,000[6], but farm workers, squatters and labour tenants also flocked into the I.C.U.

When meetings were held in the small towns and villages, Africans would pour in, in their thousands. It is reported that at Bulmer there was a 'Big muster of Natives present, probably 15,000[7]'. Kadalie, in his autobiography, describes a meeting at Vryheid in Northern Natal:

> Many came to the meeting from as far as Zululand itself. Some Europeans of this important northern Natal town were alarmed when they saw thousands of Zulus streaming into Vryheid from all directions on horses as well as horse-drawn vehicles.

Kadalie describes, too, a meeting at Middelburg, Transvaal, early in 1928, where he and Thomas Mbeki spoke:

> Africans who attended this meeting came from all parts of the North-Eastern Transvaal. When we got up from our beds on Sunday morning, we saw all sorts of primitive vehicles such as donkey carts, and horses in large numbers conveying Africans to attend the meeting. The town was somewhat

---

3. Kadalie in his autobiography
4. Roux, p. 167
5. W. G. Ballinger, as reported in the Johannesburg *Star*, 15 Nov., 1928
6. Roux, p. 167
7. Newscutting, undated, Forman Collection

alarmed at this African pilgrimage... The local press estimated the crowd that attended the meeting at 5,000.

Almost any 'dorp' you can think of, even the very smallest with just a few streets, in the middle of the Karroo, had a branch of the I.C.U. at one time or another, in the 1920's. The rapid growth of the organisation indicated a new spirit among the African people. The spirit was reflected in the I.C.U.'s early militancy.

Before the I.C.U. had even run one year, it had its first big strike in December, 1919, at the Cape Town Docks. The strike, which lasted three weeks, was partly a demand for increased wages, and partly a protest against the export of foodstuffs when prices in South Africa were rocketing in the aftermath of the First World War. Four hundred African and Coloured dock workers came out. Kadalie's description of the strike in his autobiography, conveys the excitement he felt at the realisation of the power of the non-white workers when they acted in unity:

> By 11 a. m. (17th December, 1919), the whole vast Cape Town docks was at a standstill, with hundreds of Coloured and African workers streaming out of it. Outside the dock gates, I addressed the huge crowd, officially inaugurating the first organised strike of Non-European labour in South Africa.

The strike, itself, was broken, as the *International*[8] of January 9, 1920 reported, by 'the treachery of the white workers; on December 4, the Cape Federation of Trades had adopted a resolution calling upon trade unionists to refuse to handle foodstuffs for export, and thus, it appears, the non-white workers had expected the white workers to come out as well, but this they had failed to do. However, the strike did have some effect, for about six months later, after a deputation from the I.C.U., the stevedoring companies, led by the Union Castle Company, granted an increase in wages to non-white workers, though the Government Railways and Harbours administration refused even to meet representatives of the Union.

---

8. Organ of the International Socialist League (I. S. L.), which was to help form the Communist Party in 1921

VIOLENT STATE REACTION

The I.C.U. with its first strike, came unmistakeably face-to-face with the organised violence of the South African State. A troop train was sent from Wynberg, and Africans were forcibly ejected from the Docks Location and were sent to Milnerton camp. This was just the beginning of a constant hounding of I. C. U. officials and rank-and-filers, the breaking up of strikes by police and military violence, mob violence by white civilians on I. C. U. property (as at Greytown, Weenen and Krantzkop, in Natal), and even shootings.

Less than a year after troops had been used in the Cape Town Dock Strike, in October 1920 people lost their lives in Port Elizabeth. After the arrest of the I. C. U. leader in Port Elizabeth, Samuel Masabalala, who had called for a strike in support of a demand for a 10/ — a day minimum wage for non-white workers, a crowd of people collected outside the Baakens Street police station, demanding the release of Masabalala. White civilians who had come to 'assist' the police, and the police opened fire on the crowd: 24 people were killed or died of wounds; over 50 people were wounded. The report of the Inquiry into the shootings concluded that:

> all the firing which took place after the mob broke away was directed against fugitives; that it was unnecessary, indiscriminate, and it was moreover brutal in its callousness, resulting in a terrible toll of killed and wounded without any sufficient reason or justification[9].

Open violence against the African people became an almost yearly occurrence.

In February, 1920 over 40,000 African miners had come out on strike on the Rand. The strike was broken by the use of a police cordon thrown around each compound and, it appears, miners were driven underground at the point of a gun. When the police fought their way into the Village Deep Compound several Africans were killed.

May, 1921 saw 163 Africans killed and 129 wounded at Bulhoek, near Queenstown in the Ciskei, because they refused to move off what they regarded as communal land.

---

9. Port Elizabeth Native Riots Inquiry Report, January, 1921

May 1922: Smuts sent a force of nearly 400 men, armed with four machine guns and accompanied by two bombing planes to South West Africa to 'deal with' the Bondelswart tribe, who had refused to pay the dog tax, which had been imposed on them as a means of forcing them into the labour marked. Over 100 men, women and children were killed and many more were mutilated or seriously injured. No white man died.

Leaders of the I. C. U. faced police and civilian mob violence in Bloemfontein in April 1925, when 5 Africans were killed and 24 wounded.

In October, 1928, there was a strike at Onderstepoort, a government veterinary laboratory and farm near Pretoria, where the majority of the unskilled and semi-skilled labourers were members of the I. C. U. Kadalie writes:

> On arrival at Onderstepoort I was met by a body of police armed with clubs and revolvers. I ventured to ask permission to address the men, but was told that permission could only be granted on condition that I was to advise the men to resume work unconditionally. I refused to do so and informed the authorities that the union would protect its members involved in the streik. My bold statement caused some commotion and the police adopted a threatening attitude. I was ordered to leave the premises at once. Finally the Gouvernment tock drastic action and put all the strikes in prison.

South Africa calls itself a democratic and civilised country and yet its representatives meet a leader of an African trade union organisation who had come to investigate the problems of the members of his union with batons and revolvers (which, no doubt, they had in hand to use on the strikers).

1929 saw the I. C. U. facing another violent situation, this time in Durban. This started with the victimisation of an African worker at the Docks, where the I. C. U. was particularly strong, and grew into mass action against the municipal beer-halls. Many wery killed and injured.

1930: The I. C. U. faced police violence again: This time during the general strike of African labour in East London, which started as a strike at the East London docks. Kadalie describes the scene

> By the second week a general strike was in progress which paralysed the whole industrial and commercial system of East London. The general strike was now complete, as all domestic workers in hotels, as in private homes came out. From the city men and women trekked in orderly manner towards the East Bank Location ... Strike meetings were now being attended by thousands of people. As usual the S. A. police were very active from the first day of the strike. Aeroplanes were flying overhead when strike meetings were in progress ... Police reinforcements were rushed to East London by special trains from all parts of South Africa. At the boundary between the location and the city, military vehicles were parked to transport armed police quickly as required ... At nights special civil volunteer police patrolled the location streets. It was then that I decided to disguise myself during the nights ...

The strike committee was eventually arrested. They spent two months in gaol, and then stood trial in the Supreme Court in Grahamstown, where Kadalie was sentenced to three months hard labour, or a fine of £25.

It can thus be seen that the I. C. U. found strikes and even attempts at negotiation, an extremely hazardous business. Kadalie said 'They (the whites) may bring their aeroplanes and police and form big camps everywhere, but I will simply say to the Europeans: „We won't wash your plates, nor clean your boots as long as General Hertzog shows a heart as hard as Pharoah[10]"'. But this was more easily said than done.

Open violence of this nature was, by no means, the only problem that African trade union organisers had to face. Under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, pass-bearing Africans were not recognised as 'employees', and thus their unions were given no legal recognition. This fact, of course, made negotiations extremely difficult, particularly as the white unions had legal recognition, and they could thus use the consiliation machinery to entrench and re-inforce their privileged position. And this they did.

Then, too, agricultural labourers, mine-workers and domestic workers did not fall under the provisions of the Wage Act. Under this Act workers could apply for a

---

10. Speech during 1936

minimum wage to maintain a 'civilised' standard of living. The extremely low wages of the above categories of non-white workers, of course, had (and still has) a depressing effect on the wages of all non-white workers in the South African economy. In any case, the Wage Board (set up under the Wage Act) was, in actual fact, used by unskilled white workers to maintain their privileged position as against non-white workers, and thus it merely worked as an adjunct to the 'Colour Bar Act', which reserved certain categories of work for white workers.

Many African workers, at this time, worked under contract, and they thus fell under the Masters and Servants Act. This made it a criminal offence to strike. The report of the Native Economic Commission, 1930—1932, has this to say (para. 294):

> In all Provinces Native contracts of service are generally gouverned by either the Native Labour Regulation Act or the Masters and Servants Act, which makes it a criminal offence for the employee to break his contract of service, i. e. to strike, but these acts in practice are generally not of much force in respect of daily or weekly employees. Except, therefore, in the Cape Province where Natives, who are daily or weekly employees, may combine for their mutual protection, there is in practice no power by which Natives can organise to improve their position or resist exploitation.

This was strong language for an extremely reactionary report.

Many Africans spent only short periods in the towns and then returned home for a period before returning to obtain the cash, necessary to pay taxes and for their other needs. This was particularly the case in this early stage in the industrialisation of South Africa in the 1920's, when few secondary industries had developed and there was a very small permanent African working-class in the towns. The contract and compound labour system, operated not only on the mines, but also for all types of labour. There was, for example, the Kazerne Compound in Johannesburg, catering for the South African Railways and Harbours (this was the centre of I. C. U. work when the organisation first came to Johannesburg in 1924); and there was a compound for municipal workers in Vrededorp, Johannesburg. Under this system, of course, the African worker is put in a strait-

jacket, as far as his living conditions are concerned, for he is supplied with accommodation and, very often, food, and so, the employers argue, (as they did in evidence before several Commissions), he can never claim that his cost of living is increasing, as a justification for higher wages. And, of course, the employers also argued that they were giving him a wage to support only himself, as his family were supporting itself on the land in his own territory. And thus African mine-workers were lucky if they received as much as 2/— a day. They usually received not more than 1/6 d. or 1/8 d.

The compound system also makes it easier for the authorities to regiment African labour and to break strikes. A whole system of informers was built up within the compounds on the mines. The African miners' strike of February, 1920 at the Village Deep Mine, for instance, was broken by the simple device of throwing a police cordon round every compound. As Roux points out: 'Each group of Africans thus isolated was told that all the rest had gone back to work. In the absence of an African miners' union or central strike committee, this method usually succeeded, though not without bloodshed'[11]. The development of the 'hostels' and the location system under the Urban Areas Act of 1923, and its amendments in later years, was merely a more sophisticated variant of the compound system. And so, too, the Borders Areas scheme of today, under which African workers in 'Border industries' are meant to go and sleep back in their 'homeland', before coming back the following day to work. This is all part of the vicious colonial exploitation of African labour. And as it takes place in a highly industrialised society with a complex economy and with the development of monopoly capitalism, it has many features of a fascist system.

Africans also had the great problem of trying to build stable and strong trade union organisations when most of them were unskilled labourers (forced by legislation and by agreements between the white trade unions and the

11. Roux, p. 132

employers to remain unskilled), thus easily dispensed with. At the same time, there was an enormous African labour pool on which the Gouvernment and employers could draw, not only from within South Africa itself — places like the Transkei — but from Basutoland, Swaziland, Bechuanaland, the Rhodesias, Portuguese East Africa. In this situation it was extremely difficult to build viable trade unions. The Native Economic Commission 1930—1932, Report (para. 253) considered: 'The importation of Native labourers ..... not compatible with the improvement of the economic condition of the Union Natives ....' This, again, was strong language for this sort of Commission.

African trade unionists had to face a situation where they had to try and obtain higher wages and better working conditions, with the knowledge that, even is they approached the employer with a demand, they could not back it ut with a strike, unlese they were prepared to face possible fines and gaol sentences. But their problems went even further than this: very often they would not even be received by an employer, since there was little real pressure on him in this situation to negotiate and a great deal of official pressure not to meet African trade union representatives at all. In fact, a national incident blew up towards the end of 1928: Walter Madeley, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, one of the three Labour Party Cabinet Ministers in the National Party Labour Pact Government, was asked by Prime Minister Hertzog to resign from the Cabinet after he had received an I. C. U. delegation, together with Bill Andrews of the S. A. Trade Union Congress, in connection with the conditions of the non-white post office workers. By seeing the delegation, Hertzog held, Madeley had given some sort of *de facto* recognition to the I. C. U. When Madeley refused to go, the whole Cabinet was forced to resign and was reconstituted without him. This was a clear indication by the Government as to how seriously it regarded even this sort of informal 'recognition' of the I. C. U.

The I. C. U. and the Communists

The fact that the white workers fought for and obtained a privileged position, as against the black worker — a situa-

tion confirmed by the National Party-Labour Pact of 1924 – further weakened the whole trade union movement, black and white. The Communist Party, formed in 1921, and particularly Sidney Bunting, realised how this division would weaken the working-class movement, and consistently fought for the unity of white and black workers.

From the earliest days of the I. C. U. in Cape Town, some Socialists had close connection with the organisation. Roux states that they drew up the preamble to its first constitution along the lines of the preamble of the Industrial Workers of the Wolrd (of America-. The International Socialist League (I. S. L.) had formed an organisation called the Industrial Workers of Africa, sometime before the Bucket Strike (strike of Johannesburg sanitary workers) in 1918. A branch of this organisation, in fact, worked with the I. C. U. in the days of the Cape Town Dock strike at the end of 1919. But it was soon absorbed by the I. C. U.

The famous 'Don't Scab' leaflet distributed by the I. S. L. appealed to the white miners to back up the African mineworkers' strike of February, 1920. It said:

> *White workers! Do you hear the new army of labour coming? The Native workers are beginning to wake up. They are finding out that they are slaves to the big capitalists. Food and clothing are costing more, but their wages remain the same, away down at the pig level of existence.*
>
> *White Workers! Do not repel them! The Native workers cannot rise without raising the whole standard of existence for all.*
>
> *They are putting aside their tribal differences and customs; they are entering the world-wide army of labour . . .*[12]

During the 1920's the Communist Party increasingly interested itself in the African workers, and began to realise the revolutionary role they were destined to play. Bunting wrote in the *S. A. Worker* (organ of the Communist Party)

---

12. Quoted in Roux, p. 133

at the end of 1926, commenting on Kadalie's statement that many Africans did not know what communism was.

> as if it (Communism) were a white man's affair instead of being *equally or more in this country* a black man's — he did not tell them that. (My emphasis T. Z.).

But while the Communists played a crucial role in the I. C. U., they were faced by an increasingly hostile and opportunist attitude on the part of a section of its top leadership, especially Kadalie, wich culminated in the expulsion of the Communist Party members from the I. C. U. at a National Council meeting in Port Elizabeth in December, 1926.

At the time of their expulsion in 1926 there were several Communists who held leading positions in the organisation. There was Thomas Mbeki from the Transvaal, E. J. Khaile, who was Financial Secretary, Jimmy La Guma, General Secretary, John Gomas from the Cape, and an Indian, de Norman, who was on the Cape Town Committee. The Communists in the I. C. U. began to push for improvements in the organisation: These were on three main fronts: Firstly, a firmer check on the finances of the organisation.
Secondly, the rank-and-file members of the I. C. U. and other officials to have greater control over the I. C. U. leadership. They accused Kadalie of becoming a dictator. At the meeting the expelled officials held in Korsten (just outside Port Elizabeth) immediately after the expulsions, one of the resolutoins demanded that there should be

> no exercise of autocracy by officials towards branch executives and members.

And thirdly, they called for mass action against the pass laws and other oppressive laws, and accused Kadalie of avoiding all real action. One of the resolutions adopted at the Korsten meeting called for

> passive resistance to be organised in conjunction with other bodies of African people against pass laws and other oppressive legislation.

The Communist's call for greater control of the finances of the organisation was fully justified later by the exposures of the enormous financial weaknesses in the I. C. U. There was eventually a court case exposing Champion's handling of the funds in Natal, where all the funds went into his

personal account, so that there was no distinction between I. C. U. finances and his own. After this exposure and his suspension from his post as Natal Provincial Secretary Champion broke away with the Natal section to form the I. C. U. *yase* Natal. This was followed by an epidemic of breakaways throughout the country. As Roux says:

> Secretaries were bolting with cish, the unions' furniture was being sold to pay lawyer's fees ... The events that led up to the final debacle were full of drama and tragedy. Anarchy prevailed. Individual leaders competed for power. They fought to obtain control of the I. C. U. And as they fought, the I. C. U. vanished before their eyes until there was nothing to fight over.[13]

If anything justified the call of the Communists for firmer organisation, these tragic splits did.

Now, why had Kadalie decided to expel the Communist officials? The reasons are fairly clear: He did not like their criticism of him as a potential dictator, and, linked with this, he was not prepared, it seems, to build a firm and cohesive organisation, where the lower officials and the rank-and-file would play a full part. He preferred the drama of the platform to the hard and more mundane work of building an organisation.

an organisation.

William Ballinger, who came out from Scotland as 'adviser' to the I. C. U. in 1928, had said: 'The I. C. U. was formed as a mass organisation in 1919 — all body with very little head or feet'[14]. What he meant was that there was no firm organisation, and particulary, in his view, organisation along trade union lines. One cannot agree with his attempt to impose a 'sane and constitutional' trade unionism on an African people, who had no real political and trade union rights, and were suffering under a vicious colonial-type exploitation; nonetheless his description of the I. C. U. has some truth.

Roux says of the period from about 1924:

---

13. Roux, p. 177
14. At a conference of location superintendents, held at Bloemfontein in November, 1928, as reported in the *Star* of 15 November 1928

> Nothing was done. Disillusion spread among the rank and file. But as people grew disillusioned in one district, as their enthusiasm waned and they ceased to pay their subscriptions, the I. C. U. moved on to new, untouched districts. So that it happened that by the time that the I. C. U. was flourishing in the Transvaal it was already losing members in the Cape ...[15]

This gives a fair picture of the nature of the I. C. U., as an organisation: It spread, as both Kadalie and Roux have cescribed it, like 'a veld fire', and like a veld fire it left very little behind it.

Difficulties of Consolidation

There were enormous difficulties in bulding and consolidating the I. C. U. I have already given some indication of the difficulties facing, particularly, African trade union organisers in South Africa, but Kadalie made no attempt to counteract these tendencies towards disintegration. In fact, his very approach encouraged them. He wanted to be a 'plaform thunderer', and so he and other I. C. U. leaders went from platform to platform, addressing, very often, thousands of people, but there was no real follow-up, either in organisation or mass action against oppressive laws, or strikes for better wages or working conditions. After 1919 there were almost no strikes at all, apart from Kadalie's attempt to get things going again in 1928 at Onderstepoort and 1930 at East London, and no organised mass action on other fronts. These latter strikes were desperate attempts to reassert his leadership in the African political and trade union world; otherwise the I. C. U. did very little, and I. C. U. leaders even disowned some spontaneous strikes, and tried to get workers back to work, before attempting to negotiate.

Many of the I. C. U. meetings had the tone of revivalist meetings, especially if there were any hostile whites present. At a meeting in Bloemfontein, in January 1925, Kadalie writes in his autobiography: 'I told the people to make such a hell of a noise that the white man cannot sleep'. This sort of theme is repeated over and over again at I. C. U.

15. Roux, p. 160

meetings, and in comments by Kadalie. He says in connection with a meeting in Pretoria in 1930:

> Whenever the occasion was big I used to take off my coat in order to enable me to move freely on the platform while pressing important pronouncements home. Indeed sometimes I used to knock out my interpreters when 'heated' during some of my big orations.

'Heated' had an almost revivalist meaning for Kadalie. This quality of his was strengthened with the disillusionment of his later years, when, in East London and Kingwilliamstown, he had the last of the I. C. U. branches. These were in the nature of African separatist churches where Kadalie was regarded as a Messiah.

Undoubtedly Kadalie used recialism to get rid of the communists. He played on the theme of 'the white Communists'. Bunting wrote in the *S. A. Worker* after the expulsion of the Communists: 'The white communists were attacked, no doubt in the hope of dividing the black ones from them'. The I. C. U. rank and file and the other officials, on the whole, fell for this racialist line. It is significant, however, that most opposition to the expulsion of the Communists came from the main urban centres, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. Durban, where an African nationalism whit retrogressive elements was strong, was a notable exception. Champion, the Natal leader, was able later to use this tribalism against Kadalie himself, by exploiting the fact that Kadalie was not a Zulu, came from Nyassland, and could only speak English. A great deal of the African nationalism of the I. C. U. rank and file was closely related to tribalism.

Natal, for various reasons, which I cannot deal with in any detail for lack of space, had retained a tribal cohesion or, if you like, a Zulu national cohesion, to a larger extent than Africans in other parts of South Africa. One of the reasons was that the Zulus had more land and had thus retained a strong connection with the tribal group.

Concomitant with this, they had not been drawn, to the same extent, into the urban areas, or only for relatively short periods. During the Bambata Rebellion of 1906 a young African was charged with 'spreading false reports calculated to cause unnecessary alarm'. He had written in

Zulu to an acquaintance: 'I want you to tell me about the poll tax .... I want to go to the Zulu king because I am a soldier .... I shall leave Durban and go to Zululand'.[16] This Zulu national identification was still strong in the 1920's and even much later.

The Zulus had put up a magnificent armed fight against white conquest in the 19th century, and in the Bambata rebellion of 1906 (otherwise known as the Poll Tax Rebellion) when they rebelled against the imposition of European rule, particularly that aspect which drew them away from the land and into the urban centres. Of course, the whole aim of the poll tax was to draw Africans into the growing capitalist economy. Roux has said

> The Bambata Rebellion in Natal in 1906 may very well be taken as the turning point between two periods in the history of the black man in South Africa: the early period of tribal wars and fights against the white invaders, which ended in the loss of the country and the reduction of the Bantu to the status of an internal proletariat; and the second period, one of struggle for national liberation and democratic rights within the framework of present-day South Africa, where black and white intermingle in complex economic and political relationships. During the first period the Bantu fought as isolated tribes and on military lines. Though they did not meet the whites on equal terms, but opposed shield and assegai to the rifle and machine gun, at least they met them as members of the independent tribes or nations having their own territory and military organisation ...[17]

The struggle against white domination in Natal, at least till 1930, and probably much later, had a strong element of tribal or feudal hankering for the past, instead of a more realistic and progressive policy. Petit-bourgeois elements, like Champion, mainly interested in personal power and financial gain, were able to exploit this tribalism for their own ends. It is no accident that Champion was a prime mover in the expulsion of the Communists, the vanguard of the working class. This retrogressive nationalism contributed largely to the disintegration of the I. C. U.

It is in this of the transition from a semi-feudal, tribal eco-

16. Quoted in Roux, p. 91
17. Roux, p. 87

nomy, that the use by the I. C. U. of the strike, as both a trade union and a political weapon, is so significant. For it was a recognition by Africans that they had entered a capitalist economy and that, within this economy as workers, as a proletariat, they had enormous potential power.[18]

ROLE OF 'LIBERALS'

There is another significant reason for Kadalie's expulsion of the Communist: There were white liberals who put pressure on Kadalie behind the scenes, as Kadalie, himself, has admitted in his autobiography. When Roux wrote *Time Longer than Rope* [19] he did not realise the extent of this pressure, though being himself very close to the I. C. U. and very active in politics generally, he had a pretty good idea. But now a lot of material has come to light on this subject, making it clear that there were important groups, particularly in Britain, which were interested in taming the I. C. U. The main person involved in South Africa was the novelist, Ethelreda Lewis, who had links with the Independent Labour Party in Britain. Her main contact in Britain was Winifred Holtby, who had gone out to South Africa in 1926, shortly before the expulsion of the Communists, as an independent journalist and lecturer for the League of Nations Union and was from that time 'in close touch with the National Secretary, Clements Kadalie'.

Also involved in this network (and I call it that deliberately) were the Joint Councils, particularly those in Johannesburg and Durban which had been started by Christian liberals such as Howard Pim, Rheinallt-Jones, and Edgar Brookes. The correspondence between Ethelreda Lewis and Winifred Holtby makes embarrassing and sickening reading. Ethelreda Lewis's letters, particularly, read like a very naive C. I. A. agent. She continually stresses the need for secrecy. For instance, she says in a letter to Winifred Holtby (2nd May, 1928): 'I must do all I can to remain an unsus-

18. It is true that some of the strikes had a strong element of tribal non-co-operation.
19. i. e. for the first edition

peced person in the eyes of the Communists here'. And later in the same letter, 'I said nothing but just listened to the news so usefully dropped out'; and, again: 'It will be a set-back to my work with the I. C. U. if it were known to everybody'. In a letter to General Smuts of 16 January, 1929, she refers to her 'three years' struggle to make friends for the natives powerful enough to keep them safe from the Communist influence'. And much more. It appears that she was even hoping for money from the Carnegie Trust to help in the 'work'.

The Joint Councils and those connected with them represented the interests of British imperialism in South Africa, mainly the mining houses. They influenced Kadalie to adopt what they called 'sane, constitutional' trade unionism. This meant deputations to the authorities and the employers, and, above all, avoidance of the strike or any mass action by the African people.

It was a great pity that Kadalie allowed himself to be side-tracked by these liberals, for there is no doubt that he was a remarkable man, highly intelligent, not without courage, and a magnificent orator. His power on the platform had its weaknesses, however, for, as I have already indicated he often used extremely radical statements and demagogic African nationalism to side-track any positive, organised mass action.

Nonetheless, in spite of the failure of the I. C. U., the African workers had learned the power of the strike as a trade union and a political weapon, and this, in the decades ahead they never forgot. It was a weapon they were to use over and over again.

The African workers have a priceless heritage in the maturity they have gained in the struggles of the last fifty years, and objective factors have increased their potential. The achievement of independence by so many African states in the last decade or so and the beginnings, even though in many cases not very substantial, of the development and diversification of their economies, together with the armed struggles that have been mounted in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, has made it likely that labour will not be so freely forthcoming from these areas as in the

past.[21] This will undoubtedly strengthen the African working class in South Africa.

At the same time, the economy of South Africa has developed tremendously since the hey-day of the I. C. U. It is no longer dominated by a single primary industry, the mines, but has a complex structure with a developed manufacturing sector. There are many more Africans in the towns and on the farms who have experienced for long periods the vicious exploitation of their labour. In many cases they are the third generatoin of wage-labour, and have broken all ties with the so-called 'Bantu Homelands'. In spite of the Government's attempt to reverse the flow into the towns and to build up, in Blaar Coetzee's[22] words, 'the economy on contrcat labour' a permanent African working class has developed in the towns.

Further: South Africa is suffering from an increasing shortage of skilled white labour. This factor is of fundamental importance for the further development of the struggle. There is an insoluble contradiction in the apartheid system, where the complex industrial development of our economy is fast outgrowing its colour-bar structure. With the development of the armed struggle in all the territories of Southern Africa, the white minority regime in South Africa will find its manpower stretched to breaking-point. The non-white workers will be in position to use their potential power as never before.

In this context, it can be seen how important it is for our struggle to be developed on all fronts, bringing in all the progressive sections of our society — all sections of the African people together with the Coloured and Indian people and progressive whites.

---

20. Of course, there is still the problem of the thousands of migrant workers who enter our economy from the formally independent states of Lesotho and Malawi, mainly to the mines.
21. Deputy-Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, 12 July 1968

BOOK REVIEWS

INVALUABLE SURVEY OF WORKERS

South Africa; Workers Under Apartheid by Alex Hepple, 6/- from Defence and Aid Fund, 104 Newgate Street, Lonodon EC1.

This booklet is the third in an excellent new series of pamphlets concerned with southern Africa, written for the International Defence and Aid Fund. The wide experience of its author, Alex Hepple, who was closely associated with the South African labour movement for many years, has enabled him to compile an exhaustive survey of the apartheid web in which the workers of South Africa are entangled.

Mr. Hepple gives a masterly analysis of the network of laws which control the worker — the pass laws, Master and Servant Laws, and so on. Even the white worker, although immeasurably freer than the African, is hedged in by restrictions on his right to strike which are considerably more onerous than those under which his counterpart in Europe works.

From the outset, the growth of any united non-racial trade union movement has been hampered by the determination of the Afrikaner Nationalists to obstruct it, and by the reluctance of the white workers to surrender their privileged position. The extent of this privilege is exposed in the section on wage discrimination, which makes clear that in spite of all the propaganda claims by the South African Government that the standard of living of the Africans has risen under apartheid, the gap between the wages of whites and non-whites continues to increase. In

gold-mining, for instance, the white/black earnings gap has widened from 11.7 to 1 in 1911 to 17.6 to 1 in 1966, and in real terms the cash value of African wages is no higher now and possibly lower than in 1911. White jobs are everywhere protected, and even if a shortage of white skilled labour has forced the Nationalists to rescind a few of the job reservation orders they have made it clear that in the event of any white unemployment the orders will again come into force. Thus the white workers form a labour aristocracy, fearful that any relaxation of apartheid will bring about a reduction in their standard of living and security.

The African, on the other hand, has no right to strike and no security of job or residence. He has been reduced to the status of a slave labourer, herded into the reserves or in the locations, allowed to work only on sufferance when his labour is needed.

The history of the trade unions in South Africa is littered with examples of unions or federations of unions that arose and then split and disintegrated on account of the race issue and government pressure. Therefore the South African Congress of Trade Unions stated when it was founded in 1956:

> The organising of the mass of the workers for higher wages, better conditions of life and labour is inextricably bound up with a determined struggle for political rights and liberation from all oppressive laws and practices. It follows that a mere struggle for the economic rights of the workers without participation in the general struggle for political emancipation would condemn the trade union movement to uselessness and to a betrayal of the interests of the workers.

That the Government recognised the threat to its power of such an organisation is clear from the vigorous steps it took to render Sactu ineffective. Sactu officials were banned, detained and generally harassed in their work by police raids and intimidation; many trade union officers were banned from their positions because of their membership of Sactu, and employers were urged to sack Africans who were active unionists.

Today, as Mr. Hepple says, Sactu has virtually ceased to function. It is at this stage of the booklet that its principal

defect appears. Mr. Hepple has given us some useful material in the book on the Nationalist Party attitude towards trade unions (even the traditional May Day holiday was abolished on the grounds that it was 'foreign', 'communistic' and 'anti-South African') but little if anything on the reverse side of the coin — the political struggle against apartheid. Thus the impression one gains from the booklet — not explicitly stated — is one of an all-pervasive system of oppression from which the worker has no escape. The underground activities of the African National Congress and its allies, including the Communist Party, are scarcely mentioned, and the budding guerilla struggle is not referred to. Yet these must affect the consciousness of the workers — how else explain the strike of 1,000 African dockers in Durban, unparalleled for a decade, and the threatened mass resignation of non-white hospital doctors in several hospitals, both of which occurred in the first quarter of this year?

Apart from this weakness, *Workers Under Apartheid* is a valuable source of material on all aspects of apartheid as it affects the worker.

MARY WEAVER

INFORMATIVE BUT COLD BOOK

LE POUVOIR PALE OU LE RACISME SUD–AFRICAIN

Serge Thion,
Editions du Seuil 1969, pp. 317.

With the launching of the armed struggle a new stage has been reached in the liberation of South Africa. Monopoly capitalism faces a new challenge to its domination; its most reliable agency, the apartheid system is threatened. South Africa symbolises the evil of racialism, colonialism and the ruthless violence of Western capitalism, issues which evoke a response throughout the world. As the struggle sharpens the South African issue becomes increasingly internationalised. This demands in turn the establishing of new or stronger links between the South African liberation movement and its potential allies in other countries.

The Western Governments are conniving at the situation within South Africa and actively encouraging the South African Government. France participates in the encouragement. While making sympathetic noises to some sections of the 'Third World' the French Government has carefully fostered relations with the apartheid regime. It has actively encouraged the sale of arms which will be used against the liberation movements.

The need to win French progressive opinion for more active solidarity is clear. Recent steps including the holding of an international conference in Paris and the publication of this book are part of the response to this requirement.

Serge Thion has written *Pouvoir Pale* (White Power) for a French public which he believes is profoundly ignorant about South Africa, acquainted with probably the single fact of the Boer War. It is logical therefore that part of the book should consist of a recapitulation of some of the more familiar features of South Africa's history. In giving this historical outline he systematically delineates those factors which have resulted in the establishment of apartheid. He describes the economic basis, the ideology and the political apparatus which reduces the African majority to semi-slavery and envelopes the white minority in a cocoon of social privilege. The aim of the system is clearly established, viz. to establish the mass of the population as the reserve of cheap, semi-skilled labour for the benefit of foreign monopoly and the growing South African capitalist class. This requires a political system of force and terror reinforced by the racialist ideology of the white minority.

Thion shows the growth and consolidation of the apartheid system tracing through his account of the first arrival of the Boers, the resistance of the African peoples, the colonisation by Britain, the rivalry between Boers and Britons and their subsequent alliance for the guarantee of a racially privileged position. He describes the most significant economic developments, the growth of the mining industry, the problems of agriculture with its backward technique and social relations and the emergence of a modern industrial system.

The wide ranging material is competently handled, though some of the statistical material is not up to date. It will nevertheless be of value to many people coming for the first time to consideration of the South African political system.

There are however, some regrettable aspects of the book one must challenge. Thion accuses the Western public of having merely 'lukewarm' feelings, (though he adduces no argument in support) but he himself, perhaps as a conscious choice, has written a cold book. Today, a writer on South Africa must not only present facts, he must argue a case for action, for solidarity. Readers must be brought face to face with the quality of the human tragedies that lie behind the statistics. He must feel real men an women fighting back, pitting their humanism, their beliefs, their very lives, asserting their humanity against the monstrous wickedness that is South Africa today.

It is in discussing the fight back, and especially the forces of resistance that Thion retreats into detachment. This leads him to discuss movements and organisation in utterly impersonal terms; it leads him to treat the Pan-Africanist Congress as if it were on a par with the African National Congress, it leads him to minimise the role and impact of the South African Communist Party in the liberation struggle.

It is almost inconceivable that a book on South Africa could be written today in which the name of Bram Fischer is not mentioned. A.N.C. leaders such as Mandela, Mbeki, Sisulu receive a passing mention.

It is difficult for writers to cope with the rapid unfolding of events but though Thion quotes from the A.N.C. leaflet which announced its alliance with Z.A.P.U. and the aims of the armed struggle, he does not deal with the August 1967 announcement of the launching of the armed struggle as an event of significance. He suggests that the A.N.C. has learned at last from the experiences of China, Cuba and Algeria. No doubt the A.N.C. seeks to benefit from the experiences of all peoples fighting for liberation, and the experiences of the European resistance movements will not be irrelevant either, but the essential thing to grasp is that the launching of

armed struggle is not a reversal of policies hitherto followed, but the logical extension of them.

The A.N.C. and the Communist Party have demonstrated their political maturity by developing forms of struggle specifically related to the given conditions of their country. They have offered leadership to the mass movement in exploiting all the relevant and viable forms of action to their fullest extent and they have moved in logical succession through a variety of forms of revolutionary advance.

The revolutionary programme which Thion looks for in the future is not waiting in the wings, it is being worked out now at the present stage of South Africa's history.

One is not asking for passionate partisanship for this or that organisation but for realism, for recognition of the forces which exist and which are increasingly mobilising and uniting the potential for liberation as it takes on new force and power.

JOAN BELLAMY

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

I am presently writing my doctoral dissertation on the attitudes of the Methodist and Anglican churches toward the trade union movement between 1914 and 1968. I would appreciate hearing from any of your readers who remember actions or statements made by these churches, their members or their clergy, especially with regard to

1. Rand Strike, 1922
2. African Miners' Strikes, 1946
3. Banning of Trade Union Leaders, 1950s and 1960s
4. Communists in Trade Unions.

Nancy van Vuuren.

History Department,
University of Pittsburgh,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 15213.

A LETTER FROM NIGERIA

In the last issue of *The African Communist* there were three letters criticising the article of A. Zanzolo (No. 36, First Quarter 1969) on the situation in Nigeria arising out of the secession of the former Eastern Region. These letters are no doubt well meant. They attempt to formulate a Marxist analysis of the Nigerian crisis. However the writers, Idris Cox (of Great Britain) Toussaint and J. Girodot (presumably South African comrades) seem to be rather ill-informed about vital aspects of the situation in my country.

Toussaint asks a number of pertinent questions, to which only the dialectic of history will, in the end, provide the answers. The first question, he says, is 'that Biafra must have the right to decide ... whether to secede'. (To me, by the way, this seems to be not a question but an answer.) With respect, this is NOT the first question. The first question is: is there such a thing as Biafra?

Toussaint's assumption or belief that 'Biafra is an amalgam of tribes' is grossly mistaken and misleading. The former Eastern Region now arbitrarily renamed 'Biafra' by Ojukwu (did he consult the people in concocting this unknown name, comrade Toussaint?) was inhabited by a number of ethnic groups. They were not 'amalgamated' and inhabited different territories.

It is true that the Ibo constituted a majority of this region, which (please note, comrade Cox!) was a British-imposed geographical entity. They are about 7 million.

But the area also comprised minorities amounting to no less than 5 million people. The Efiks, Ogojas and Ibibios – now in the South Eastern State —– comprise over three and a half million. In the newly-formed Rivers State live the Ijaws, Bugamas, Kalabaris and others, with a population of one and a half million.

Idris Cox is quite right when he says the Ibos have the right to self-determination. But if they claim that right for themselves, how can they deny it to other minorities in

Nigeria? That is exactly what the ruling clique of 'Biafra' refuses to accept. This is the crux of the question.

This was a bone of contention in the pre-civil war period, when these minorities were never adequately represented in the government of the former Eastern Region. J. Girodot is clearly unfamiliar with the economy, the geography and the former administrative structure of Nigeria. In the former Eastern Region the Ibos occupied 11,310 square miles; the various other ethnic groups inhabited a far greater area: 18,174 square miles. They produce the bulk of the agricultural exports of the area, and their land yields most of Nigeria's oil.

In fact the federal military government, by creating twelve Nigerian states, has provided real conditions for the exercise of self-determination. The former Eastern Region is replaced by three new states which in fact fulfil what Lenin demanded in similar situations:

> local self-government with autonomy for regions having special economic and social considerations; a distinct national composition of the population.
>
> *Collected Works,* Moscow 1964, Vol. 20, p. 46

Toussaint shows sound understanding when he writes that the 'Biafran' movement 'could well be only a propaganda appearance devised by the ruling Biafran clique for its own purposes'. And even more so when he adds that this is 'precisely the matter that needs study, investigation and an assessment made on the spot by organisations with close contact amongst the people . . .'

It is the more regrettable that, defying these sound remarks of his, he then proceeds —— without study, investigation or contact with the people of Nigeria —— virtually to prejudge this very issue, on the basis of some extremely dubious 'straws in the wind'.

Certainly, we need a thorough Marxist analysis of the national question plaguing Nigeria. But this must be based on a far deeper study and understanding of the facts than your correspondents have displayed.

UDOBO ADAMS

Benin City, Nigeria.

PRAISE FROM READERS

I congratulate you on another excellent issue of *The African Communist.* It was, as usual, relevant, well-written and interesting. I find your magazine easily one of the best in the English language. Let me say that I find it relevant not only because it is useful and necessary for us in the United States to know what is going on in South Africa, but also because there is a consistent attempt made in your magazine to talk about your problems in comparison and contrast with problems in other parts of the world. Thus, aside from the major article on black people in this country last summer, there are comments in many other articles that make direct reference to us here. In short, it gives me great pleasure to send you the enclosed cheque for a two-year subscription. Keep up the good work and good luck in all your enterprises.

RANDOLPH SCHUTZ

Jamaica, N. Y., U.S.A.

The African Communist is certainly a marvellous magazine and the few that I have read have given me a great deal of ammunition, so to speak, in propagating and advancing the ideal of a free, socialist Africa for the future.

A. S. McGROTTY

Dublin

THE THEORIES OF REGIS DEBRAY

by JOE SLOVO

One Shilling (add 3d for postage)

AFRICA: NATIONAL AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Papers from the Cairo Seminar. 259 pages.
Three Shillings and Sixpence (add 1s. for postage)

WHAT I DID WAS RIGHT

by BRAM FISCHER

One Shilling (add 3d. for postage)

THE ROAD TO SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM

(Programme of the South African Communist Party)

One Shilling (add 3d. for postage.)
FROM

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS

39 Goodge Street,
London W 1
ENGLAND.

POST FREE

You may get **The African Communist** sent to you post free by becoming a subscriber.

Anywhere in Africa 4s. per year (four issues) or equivalent in local currency.

Europe 10s. (one year) 15s. (two years).

America and Asia $1.50 (one year) $2.25 (two years) (airmail $3).

Students: Full-time students—deduct one quarter on above rates (except airmail).

Inkululeko Publications, 39 Goodge Street, London, W.1